

Princess Basma celebrates birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Basma celebrates her 47th birthday today, coinciding with the 21st anniversary of the establishment of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), chaired by Princess Basma since its inception in 1977.

The establishment of QAF came upon the directives of His Majesty King Hussein to continue improving the living conditions of the Jordanian people. It has now 50 community development centres around the Kingdom, concentrated in rural areas.

The QAF is present in international and regional forums concerned with women and development issues.

Princess Basma was appointed honorary ambassador of the United Nations for Human Development Affairs and member of a senior-level commission on women's health at the World Health Organisation (WHO).

She was also appointed member of the Higher Steering Committee for Sustainable Development, formed by the U.N. secretary general, in implementation of resolutions adopted by the Earth Summit. The Princess also belongs to the Board of the Earth Council, the Earth Charter Commission, and the Board of the Population Council.

On March 8, 1996, Princess Basma was appointed extraordinary ambassador for the United Nations Women's Development Fund (UNIFEM), in appreciation of her dedicated efforts in women's issues at national, regional, and international levels.

She is president of the Jordanian Association for Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and member of the Olave Baden-Powell Society.

At the national level, Princess Basma is also the chairperson of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW), whose establishment by the government in 1992 represented a turning point for Jordanian women.

Comprising senior officials and representatives of governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with women's affairs, the JNCW established viable mechanisms for cooperation to upgrade the status of women in Jordan and formulated the Jordanian National Strategy for Women under which priorities of women were defined.

To implement the strategy, Princess Basma established women's committees in all the governorates to enable Jordanian women to attain self-reliance and directly participate in defining and implementing plans and programmes



aimed at enhancing their role in the society.

Upon the Princess' initiative, 99 women were appointed members of municipal councils in the period which preceded the first general local elections in 1996.

This contributed to changing society's view towards women and their role, later reflected in the 13 women who won local elections, one of them as mayor for the first time in the history of Jordan.

Princess Basma also established the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), comprising women's committees to serve as the legal body representing them. The JNFW's establishment was

another landmark achievement towards Jordanian women.

The Princess formed a coordinating committee for non-governmental women's organisations working under the umbrella of the JNCW to enhance cooperation and joint efforts of these organisations in the interest of Jordanian women.

She also continued to chair the QAF and laid down the groundwork for sustainable development based on presence in targeted communities through a network of centres to study their respective situations and define their needs and priorities while training them to participate in their own development projects and programmes.

Jordanian, Israeli environmentalists examine mosquito problem in Aqaba area

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian and Israeli environmentalists met in Aqaba on Sunday to look into ways of combating swarms of mosquitoes plaguing the twin Red Sea cities of Aqaba and Eilat.

They also looked into possible pollution caused by wastewater treatment plants situated in both cities.

Duraid Mahasneh, secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority, led the Jordanian team while Nebama Ronen, secretary general of the Ministry of Environment, headed the Israeli side, according to Israeli embassy spokesperson Ro'ey

Gilad.

Specialists from both sides attended the meeting in line with the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, which has a chapter on "environmental cooperation."

"Many meetings have been held between the two countries in order to solve the issue [of mosquitoes]," Mr. Gilad said. "However, they did not manage to define the main source of the problem."

Jordanian officials were not immediately available for comment. Another joint committee has held several meetings to try and find a

solution for flies pestering residents of the Dead Sea and various parts of the Jordan Valley, especially in summer.

"According to the Arabic daily 'Al Arab Al Yawm', the Israeli government recently sent a letter to Jordan protesting against pollution caused by Aqaba's wastewater treatment plant situated near the border with Eilat."

In return, Jordan claims the pollution is being caused by a similar wastewater treatment plant that was dumping its residue into the Gulf of Aqaba.

Labour federation begins preparations for unemployment conference

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The General Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions will soon

start drafting working papers on the local labour market in preparation for an upcoming national conference on unemployment, federation chairperson

Mazen Ma'aitah said Sunday.

Mr. Ma'aitah told the Jordan Times that the conference, which has been approved by the government in response to a request by Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Emoush, is of vital importance to the country's economy and has long been demanded by the labour federation.

The working papers, which will be submitted by the public and private sectors, will aim to define the underlying causes of unemployment and means of addressing this chronic issue, said Mr. Ma'aitah.

One of the papers that the federation will submit will deal with the question of linking the training and education system in Jordan to the local market's employment needs, while another will feature experiments by other countries that faced unemployment problems, he added.

The papers will also discuss the Kingdom's economic policies, privatisation, and the Jordanian-European association agreement and its impact on unemployment.

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Consortium wins contract for feasibility study on Amman-Zarqa light railway

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications awarded a contract Sunday to a consortium of two Japanese firms and a Jordanian company to conduct a feasibility study on building a light railway between Amman and Zarqa.

The consortium will conduct the study over a period of one year and prepare technical, financial and legal reports and tender documents on the project with the assistance of the ministry, according to a statement following the signing ceremony.

The statement noted that once the study has been completed, the project will be open for implementation by private sector firms.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Transport Sami Gammoh and the representatives of the three firms, said the statement.

The project represents the first phase of a railway network to transport passengers around densely populated

regions including Zarqa, Amman and Sweileh, reduce pollution, ease traffic congestion and curtail road accidents, it added.

The signing of the agreement came two days after Mr. Gammoh visited the Hijaz Railway Corporation and inspected the railway station at Mahatta, where he inaugurated a freight car that was converted into a 50-seat passenger carriage.

At present, trains running on parts of the Hijaz Railway, built by the Ottomans

at the beginning of the 20th century, are used for short excursions by tourists.

Both the minister and the companies' representatives highlighted the importance of a railway network in Jordan and their determination to make the project a success.

They said the railway line between the three cities will constitute part of an overall network linking cities inside Jordan and connecting the Kingdom with neighbouring countries.

Majali meets with Arab-Chinese commerce delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and a delegation representing the Arab-Chinese Chamber of Commerce on Sunday reviewed scopes of cooperation between Jordan and China in trade and economic affairs.

Dr. Majali underlined the Kingdom's desire to promote relations with China and facilitate the exchange of goods between Chinese and Jordanian markets through the private sector.

The emergence of huge international economic blocs should give the Arabs and the Chinese an incentive to further promote mutual relations and strengthen economic cooperation, he added.

The chamber, which groups representatives of Arab chambers of commerce and the Chinese chamber of commerce, has been holding a series of meetings to discuss issues pertaining to Arab-Chinese trade exchanges.

Also Sunday, the prime minister visited the Ministry of Interior and attended part of a regular ministry meeting of department heads.

Dr. Majali said the government has made extensive efforts to carry out its decentralisation policy to save time and effort on the part of citizens.

Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid outlined the ministry's current projects, including a ministry restructuring programme and the decentralisation strategy.

Mr. Rashid was quoted by the British Broadcasting Corporation on Sunday as calling for regional and international cooperation to combat terrorism, which he said continues to threaten the stability of all societies and negatively affects social, developmental, economic and political life.

He referred to a recent agreement reached by Arab ministers of interior and justice aimed at combating terrorism.

Union's financial crisis leaves farmers without April pay

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Over 74 employees of the Jordan Valley Farmers Federation have not received their April salaries because of a severe cash crisis plaguing the union, an federation official said Sunday.

Farmers owe the federation around JD800,000 in principal repayments on old loans while the government has yet to pay JD450,000 in the form of an annual grant decreed in 1996 to help ease the plight of the union's members.

"In the past three months we never received our full salaries," said a federation official who requested anonymity. "Now, we are almost close to mid-May and we have not received any payment for April," he told the Jordan Times.

"What can we do, we can't leave our job after our long service to try and find another job," he complained. "We are too old for that."

The private-run union, which has long relied on government funds, helps over 6,000 farmers scattered across the Jordan Valley, the country's main food basket, by giving them loans and educating them on latest farming and marketing techniques.

The JD800,000 debt was incurred from loans extended to farmers, including JD535,000 in interest accumulated over the years.

In 1996, the government decided to exempt the farmers from paying interest and agreed to grant the union JD250,000 annually to ease its financial crisis and allow it to find a solution.

Though the government honoured its full commitment in 1996, it only paid the union JD50,000 in 1997 and has not allocated anything for 1998.

"Despite the exemption and many other measures taken by the union to force the farmers to pay, they have been unable to repay their debts because of their bad financial situation," said the official.

"They are unable to meet

commitments that have been piling up since 1978 because of unstable prices of commodities, the closure of Gulf markets to Jordanian produce after the Gulf war and unpredictable weather conditions over the years that damaged much of their farm produce," said the official.

Most Gulf countries, formerly major importers of Jordanian farm produce, halted the entry of local goods due to Jordan's perceived pro-Iraq position during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

However, most Gulf countries, excluding Saudi Arabia, have resumed agricultural imports from Jordan over the past two years. Saudi is about to resume imports after sorting out technical issues with Jordan, including pledges that local produce is not polluted by wastewater and the overuse of pesticides.

A parliamentary committee is looking into ways to ease the plight of the farmers union.

Extraordinary House session to convene in early June — Srouf

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament is expected to convene its extraordinary session early next month to discuss a number of draft laws and other outstanding issues, according to House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srouf.

Mr. Srouf was quoted by the Arabic daily Al Ra'i on Sunday as saying that a majority of deputies had submitted a memorandum asking the government to convene the session.

The agenda of the extraordinary session will include topics suggested by the deputies and others proposed by the government, he added.

According to Mr. Srouf, the government wishes to add several draft laws to be debated in the coming session, including issues which the deputies did not

include in their memorandum.

Among these draft laws, he said, are those to which the government had pledged commitment before the House in its ordinary session, such as the anti-trust draft law.

Underlining the importance of the upcoming extraordinary session, Mr. Srouf said the House cannot discuss any issues that are not included in the agenda, which will be submitted to Parliament through a Royal Decree.

Informed sources said the session will focus attention on numerous draft laws that had earlier been referred to the specialised House committees.

The deputies will concentrate on efforts to ensure the endorsement of

the largest number of laws rather than giving up time for general discussions, the sources added.

Referring to the previous ordinary session, which ended on March 28, Mr. Srouf said it featured lengthy debates on the government's performance and so there was not sufficient time for endorsing laws.

According to the Al Ra'i report, the following draft laws will be on the agenda of the extraordinary session: elections, competition and anti-trust, customs, protection of national production, traffic, higher education, Jordanian universities, the higher education council, organising vocational training, the Jordan Press Association, labour and press and publications.

He added that universities could deal with such problems by adopting an orientation programme for students and imposing compulsory courses "in order for them to learn new concepts that will help them cope with the changes of their new environment."

The lecture, which was held at Le Meridien Hotel, was organised by the American Universities Alumni Club.

Planned overhaul of educational curriculum to remove stereotypes of women

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan plans to overhaul its educational curriculum by removing materials that encourage negative stereotyping of women as part of wider efforts to reduce female abuse.

Ministry of Education Secretary General Izzat Jaradat told a two-hour lecture on violence in Jordanian society that the Educational Research Department at the ministry "will launch a study next year to determine forms of discrimination or stereotyping of women and will work on changing it."

Many students say their schoolbooks portray women as housewives, responsible for cooking, cleaning and caring for children, and fail to mention their professional potential as lawyers, academics and doctors.

"We have conducted a thorough study on the old curriculum and used it to illuminate all forms of gender discrimination in the textbook books. We will soon launch a similar study on the rest of the

grade school books," Dr. Jaradat told the participants.

Dr. Jaradat also referred to corporal punishment, "which remains a problem in our over 2,500 government schools."

The Ministry of Education banned corporal punishment in 1962, "but still, the phenomenon occurs despite our continuous calls to end such practices," he said.

"One of our main duties is to raise teachers' awareness about the negative reaction such practices could have on students," the ministry official stressed.

But violence is also prevalent among the over one million students attending Jordanian schools, Dr. Jaradat maintained.

He reviewed some statistics that were collected from school records which indicated that shouting and causing problems topped the chart with 3,821 incidents in one year. There were 2,581 cases of vandalism of school property and 1,771 cases of fighting among students.

"Social changes, in addition to rapid changes in communications,

have brought social problems," he explained.

He also reviewed a 1990-1995 study conducted by the Ministry of Interior on juveniles which indicated that 3,096 violent crimes were committed in schools.

Theft and vandalism accounted for 2,575 cases. Moral crimes and molestation cases totalled 329. There were 93 attempted suicides among students during the five-year period, 53 cases of carrying firearms to school, and nine reports of fraud. There were also two premeditated murders and 35 attempted murders reported.

Dr. Jaradat stressed that proper education and educating students in a democratic manner are the most important ways of solving these problems.

In his address to the participants, Brigadier General Hisham Ensour, head of the Amman Police Department, said Jordan has witnessed several "upsetting and strange crimes."

The police official echoed Dr. Jaradat's remarks, saying that rapid social changes and the com-

munications revolution have helped lead to violence similar to that experienced in other societies and "frustration among individuals stemming from lack of equal opportunities."

Brig. Gen. Ensour stated that there were 2,303 violent crimes reported in the Kingdom last year, including 105 murders, 273 attempted murders, 297 armed robberies, 92 rapes, 1,000 assaults and 536 molestation incidents.

Brig. Gen. Ensour criticised the current penal laws, which he said "are not harsh enough to deter violence."

"The responsibility falls on us and the entire society, the government and the media in order to fight violence," he said.

Minister of Social Development Mohammad Khair Mamser said "social violence in Jordan stems from many factors, which include social and economic pressure, political causes and the feeling of inequality among individuals."

The minister said that about 85 per cent of the crimes committed by juveniles were expressions of

violence and hatred. He added that 85 per cent of minors who commit such crimes come from normal families.

Majid Khair, a sociologist at the University of Jordan, said there are several theories on violence at universities, stating that in his opinion it "is not the result of society, but rather the university environment."

"There is a tendency among students to unite into groups, and this tendency stems from... circumstances based on the students' interests and needs," he added.

These groups, he maintained, grow and look for power, "and this is when violence could start."

He added that universities could deal with such problems by adopting an orientation programme for students and imposing compulsory courses "in order for them to learn new concepts that will help them cope with the changes of their new environment."

The lecture, which was held at Le Meridien Hotel, was organised by the American Universities Alumni Club.

FAA grounds older Boeing 737s after discovering wire wear

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government on Monday grounded older models of the Boeing 737, the world's most popular jet, after mandatory inspections found extensive wear in power lines running through their wing fuel tanks.

The order affected 15 percent of the U.S. passenger jet, causing flight cancellations as the business week began.

The fleet-wide grounding, the first since McDonnell-Douglas DC-10s were grounded in 1979 following a crash in Chicago, came five days after the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) gave airlines up to a week to inspect their 737s for signs of wear in the wiring of the pipes that carry the fuel through the fuel tanks.

A recent inspection of a Continental Airlines 737 and both exposed wires and holes in the piping believed to have been caused by electrical sparks. Officials feared the mixture of fuel, air and electricity

could spark an explosion such as that which downed the Paris-bound TWA Flight 800 shortly after takeoff from New York. By Saturday afternoon, 13 more aircraft had been inspected and mechanics found chafing in half of the hundreds examined. One wiring bundle in a United Airlines 737 showed signs of sparking in one spot and a

Boeing: We're doing all we can to minimize any schedule disruptions

second area where the wires had been worn bare, most likely from vibration over the plane's 50,000 hours in flight.

That prompted the FAA to revise its original order, ordering all Boeing 737-100 and 200 series aircraft immediately out of passenger service until they could be inspected and repaired. The planes have cigar-shaped engines mounted directly under their wings.

118 such planes in the United States and 282 worldwide.

Based on the early inspections, the FAA also let airlines discontinue inspections of another set of pipes and wires leading to the aircraft's center fuel tank. In all 13 aircraft inspected, there were no signs of chafing found in that wiring.

"While we are concerned about [the inspections] and the disruption it may have on

the system, the No. 1 concern of the FAA is safety," said Thomas McSweeney, the FAA's director of aircraft certification.

Boeing supported the action, which followed its own service bulletin to aircraft owners on April 24.

"We're doing everything we can to minimize any schedule disruptions to affected 737 operators and we will continue working with the FAA to monitor the inspection results and take any other action that may be advisable," said Boeing spokesman Russ Young. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which investigates airline accidents, commended the FAA for taking "aggressive" action to identify and eliminate one of the dangers identified during the investigation into TWA Flight 800 — potential ignition sources that could spark a fuel tank explosion.

"The FAA is to be congratulated for its swift action," NTSB Chairman Jim Hall said in a statement Sunday.

J.N. struggles to rebuild Afghan region destroyed by quake

OSTAK, Afghanistan (AP) — The United Nations and humanitarian groups are racing a major task in rebuilding the earthquake-ravaged region of northern Afghanistan even as renewed fighting breaks out.

Not only must they rebuild thousands of homes but also provide water, agricultural support and reestablish basic infrastructure in the villages.

Official from ACTED, a non-governmental aid group, said Sunday.

The quake on Feb. 4 hit 14 villages in the region, almost wiping out six of them and leaving several thousand people dead.

In the tiny hamlet of Ghanji, a village on a mountainside at a height of more than 2,000 meters, around 800 people died when their houses were

destroyed by a landslide. "We are going to concentrate on the most damaged villages but that does not mean we are going to ignore others," explained Frederic Roussel of ACTED.

Agence pour la Coopération technique et le développement.

Up to now, aid agencies have been focusing on bringing in urgent supplies to help survivors get through the

hitter winter.

Bradley Foerster from the U.N. Development Programme estimates the value of the emergency aid at around \$500,000.

Mr. Foerster said he had a budget of \$2 million, provided by donor countries after the quake, to bring help to the region with the operation scheduled to start in June. He estimated that only \$1 million would be needed to rebuild the villages.

ACTED estimated that overall some 2,500 houses were destroyed as well as dozens of small bridges over mountain streams.

Official figures initially estimated the death toll at 4,000 but a survey in the affected villages subsequently put it at around 2,300.

Of the original 700 families left homeless, only 290 still needed shelter two months later and now all have been housed in camps thrown up by the aid groups in the first days after the quake.

"There are actually more of them (in the camp) than before," said one aid worker, adding that poor families from other villages had come in hoping to get aid supplies.

But officials in the province of Takhar, which includes

Rostak, have criticised the effort, saying aid has been insufficient.

Local commander Hadji Sobanqul told AFP aid had been too little and had arrived very late.

More than 2,400 families still need urgent help, he said, adding: "I'm waiting to see what sort of international aid will arrive to rehabilitate them."

The situation in the province has also worsened with renewed fighting.

Taliban forces are battling the troops of Ahmad Shah Masood around the town of Ishkani in the southwest of Takhar province.

The province is controlled by the Jamiat-Islami, a major faction within the opposition alliance, official sources in Rostak told AFP.

It was unclear who effectively controlled the strategic area, where northern alliance commander Masood is directing the fighting.

The Taliban are aiming to capture the town and cut the road between the provincial capital Taloqan and Pul-i-Khumri, an important communications hub north of the Salang tunnel.

Indian nurses strike for sixth day defying government threats

NEW DELHI (AFP) — More than 11,000 nurses in the Indian capital continued a crippling strike for a sixth day Sunday despite a government threat to sack a third of the protesters.

Gurdarshan Kaur Khurana, chief of the Delhi Nurses Union (DNU), spearheading the strike, said: "Our girls are threatening to commit self-immolation. We cannot be bullied by disciplinary and police action. We will show the government how strong we are."

Ms. Khurana said nurses were being "dragged out of their hostels by policemen and forced to join duty" and added that her organisation would appeal to a national women's council for an end to the "police excesses."

Health Minister Dalit Ezhilmalai late Saturday said he would replace 3,665 striking nurses in three of Delhi's seven main state-run hospitals "if necessary."

"I have given enough opportunities to my sisters. At the same time, the government has a responsibility," he said of the hundreds of thousands who have been turned away from hospitals here following of the nurses' strike.

"We can no longer remain a silent spectator to the situation. Our intention is to restore normalcy in hospitals."

Police and authorities at government hospitals denied Khurana's accusation that nurses were being forced to return to work.

"It is an absolute falsehood," Kusum Sahgal, principal of the state-run Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital said Sunday.

She claimed the strike has hit 32 major state-run hospitals and some smaller clinics and dispensaries.

The Indian government has described as unacceptable the nurse's demands which include rises in laundry allowance, house rent, quicker promotion and better training.



Sinn Féin's president Gerry Adams (right) has a quiet word with chief negotiator Martin McGuinness at the start of their party's conference in Dublin. The Sinn Féin resumed their party conference which was adjourned April 19 and recommended a 'Yes' vote in the upcoming referendums on the Northern Ireland peace deal (See story on page 1) (Reuters photo)

China stepping up defence presence near Indian coast

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India has "crucial evidence" of a strong Chinese naval presence in Myanmar and Chinese vessels are visiting islands near the Indian coast to monitor signals traffic, a daily said Sunday.

The Pioneer newspaper quoted unidentified Indian officials as saying they had proof that at least 42 Chinese naval engineers and operations officers had been deployed in seven Myanmar (Burma) naval bases in the Bay of Bengal.

They said the bases, including the Coco Islands, the Hainan Islands and the Ayeyarwady naval station, were located near India's east coast.

"Senior officials said the Chinese have been building up the pressure by sending

vessels to intercept Indian signals communications," the Pioneer said, adding that the latest sighting occurred in March.

India's new Defence Minister George Fernandes has sparked a storm by accusing China as India's number one threat. He has accused it of building up naval bases on Myanmar's territory and of helping Pakistan to develop a surface-to-surface missile.

China has denied being a threat to India. Mr. Fernandes toned down his remarks but said there could be no "let-up" of troops deployed on the Indo-Chinese border.

Mr. Fernandes also accused Beijing of stockpiling nuclear weapons and extending military airfields in Tibet to India's north

during the past six months, adding that China was also training Myanmar's army. India and China fought a brief border war in 1962, leading to a virtual freeze in ties for 14 years. Relations have been on the mend and several high-level visits exchanged. Last month, the People's Liberation Army chief General Fu Quanyou came to India for talks.

India says China still holds 40,000 square kilometres of its territory in Kashmir. China lays claim to a swathe of Indian territory in the far eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Mr. Fernandes is a long-standing critic of China and of the military junta in Myanmar and one of the most vocal Indian supporters of Tibetan independence.

Sarno gathers to bury Italian mudslide victims

SARNO, Italy (AFP) — Thousands of mourners began gathering Sunday in the stadium at Sarno, the southern Italian community worst hit by last week's devastating mudslides, for the mass funeral of nearly 100 victims.

President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Prime Minister Romano Prodi were to attend the service at the stadium dominated by the Monte d'Albano, still streaked with rivers of mud.

Shortly before 9 a.m. (0700 GMT), the first of 97 coffins were carried into place at the stadium, where Nocera Bishop Gioacchino Iliano is to officiate at the funeral service.

Thousands of mourners, some in a state of uncontrollable grief, had already filled the stadium early Sunday.

In Rome, Italian officials announced that at least 118

people were killed as mud flooded down the mountainside last Tuesday.

Officials have repeatedly revised the toll upwards since the disaster struck.

In addition to those known to have perished, a further 100 people are missing, according to Italian authorities, but local sources said a more realistic figure was between 300 and 400. The local sources said that the number of missing could be 150 in Sarno alone.

Awaiting the beginning of Sunday's funeral service, women dressed in black began to assemble round the coffins. Around a dozen small white coffins contained the bodies of children swept to the deaths by the tidal wave of mud and debris.

Medical services had to intervene as, under the burden of grief, one woman fainted and others began to scream.

Taking the microphone, a priest asked for doctors to administer tranquillisers to the stricken mourners.

Earlier, posters were pasted up around the town of Sarno to invite the community's 30,000 people to make their way to the stadium.

In the unearthly silence of the town, shutters were firmly shut, traffic banned and any non-essential activities suspended from 10 a.m. (0800 GMT), on the orders of town authorities.

The tragedy has led to anger as well as sorrow.

Saturday, 100,000 people took to the streets of Rome, according to organisers, as criticism mounted that Italian authorities could have acted to prevent the catastrophe or at least limit its scale.

Monday has been declared a national day of mourning.

Ten Indians held over human organs racket

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Ten people have been arrested for alleged involvement in a human organs racket related to 150 illegal kidney transplants, the Hindustan Times daily said Sunday.

Police said the 10, including three doctors, a police constable and a nursing home staff member, were charged with wrongful confinement and endangering the life of a person.

They were arrested in the New Delhi suburb of Noida Saturday after a patient, Shaikat Ali, complained a kidney had been removed without his consent.

"Shaikat was trapped with the offer of a job in Singapore," the newspaper said, adding that he had been taken to a nursing home run by the doctors, sedated and "on regaining his senses found his kidney removed."

Police said the doctors in Noida had performed about 150 kidney transplants by luring poor people from New Delhi's medieval Walled City area, predominantly inhabited by poor Muslims.

They said the kidneys were sold to recipients for 80,000 rupees (\$2,051) — about double the amount that was paid to the "donors."

The 10 were arrested a day after two doctors from the eastern city of Ranchi, in Bihar state, were held following a similar complaint.

The Bihar victim said he had been taken to a nursing home in Ranchi, run by one of the arrested doctors, by a man who promised him a job in the Middle East but said he had to undergo a medical check-up first.

He said he was sedated and when he regained consciousness a nurse told him that one

of his kidneys had been removed.

The victim said he was later told that the kidney had been sold to an Arab and he was promised 50,000 rupees (\$1,282) — a sum he has yet to receive.

An illegal and flourishing trade in human organs — mainly kidneys and eyes — had been rampant in India. A series of scandals resulted in the Human Organs Transplant Act in 1994, which bans kidney donations to anyone except close relatives.

The legislation, which is in force only in some Indian states, provides jail terms and stiff fines for middlemen. Doctors can permanently lose their licence.

In recent years India had become a favourite for foreigners seeking kidney transplants.

Indian PM 'should be tough on coalition partners'

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian Premier Atal Behari Vajpayee must be "firm and tough" to keep his loose-knit government in power, a cabinet minister said Sunday after coalition members demanded more concessions in return for their support.

Commerce Minister Ramakrishna Hegde said in a television interview that Mr. Vajpayee "has to be firm and has to be tough, if necessary, in the interest of keeping his coalition intact." "He has to perhaps choose his colleagues (carefully) and... reshuffle his cabinet."

Mr. Hegde's comments came a day after Mr. Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian People's Party) and its numerous regional allies held talks on disputes dogging the alliance since it came to power on March 19.

In Saturday's meeting, maverick politician Jayalalitha Jayaram, a regional ally from the southern state of Tamil Nadu, demanded the sacking of the administration in her home state. She lost power in the state in provincial elections in 1996.

Similarly two other regional allies wanted rival parties running the states of West Bengal and Orissa to be dismissed for inefficiency and maladministration.

Mr. Hegde said Mr. Vajpayee had earlier given in to several "unreasonable demands" by the more than dozen allies, saying the prime minister should have "asserted" himself. He said the demands had a "cumulative effect."

The government had been plagued by a "period of unpleasantness" since it came to power, he said.

The BJP-led coalition has also been wracked by veiled threats of a withdrawal of support and corruption allegations which have led to the sacking of two cabinet ministers.

Ms. Jayalalitha had earlier demanded the resignation of several ministers, including Commerce Minister Hegde, after one of her protégés in the cabinet was forced to quit over corruption allegations.

She commands the support of 27 members of parliament within the 264-seat coalition and could have brought down the government by switching to the equally fragmented opposition.

Another ally of the nationalists quit his provincial ministerial post following charges of corruption.

That was followed by sabre-rattling by Defence Minister George Fernandes, a Socialist leader member of the ruling coalition, who accused China of constructing a heliport in a disputed area at the border and helping Pakistan to develop a surface-to-surface missile.

Mr. Vajpayee denied the first allegation but Mr. Fernandes' repeated anti-China comments have been an acute embarrassment for the government.

Mr. Hegde said Mr. Fernandes had shot off his mouth.

"We should not say anything unnecessarily which would strain our relationship particularly with China," he said, adding that Mr. Fernandes was a "highly emotional" person.



U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke (left) and Kenya's Foreign Minister George Saitoti (right) at the start of a meeting in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

MPs, journalists in as police storm rally in western Kenya

Nairobi (AFP) — Ten MPs and journalists were injured, some seriously, when police stormed a rally in western Kenya on Sunday, the Kenyan government reported.

The rally, which included opposition MPs and journalists, was held in the town of Kisumu, about 100 km from Nairobi.

Police said they were trying to disperse the crowd when they opened fire on the protesters.

At least 10 people were injured, some seriously, and several others were taken to hospital.

The rally was held to protest against the government's handling of the 1997 elections.

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U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke (left) talks with ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova at the start of a meeting in the offices of the Democratic League of Kosovo (Reuters photo)

U.S. envoy Holbrooke meets Rugova after Milosevic rebuff

PRISTINA, Serbia (R) — U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke met ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova Sunday after Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic refused to accept foreign mediation of Kosovo's demand for independence.

Mr. Holbrooke spent 4 1/2 hours with Mr. Milosevic Saturday without budging the Yugoslav leader over his rejection of mediation, despite Western sanctions which threaten to inflict fresh damage on his crippled economy.

Tanjug news agency reported Mr. Milosevic as saying "the question of international representation in seeking a solution to the (Kosovo) problem was removed from the agenda by the national ref-

erendum."

Serbs voted overwhelmingly against foreign mediation in a referendum last month, although many fear the effects of sanctions.

"President Milosevic is always tough," Mr. Holbrooke told reporters who asked how his meeting went in Belgrade.

Rugova, with Western support, has refused direct talks with the Belgrade government without the participation of a mediator and has boycotted negotiations on Mr. Milosevic's offer of autonomy within Serbia.

Mr. Holbrooke, a wall street banker since leaving government service, emerged as a go-between Saturday after the west stepped up sanctions against Belgrade by banning foreign investment in

Yugoslavia.

He was due to go to Tirana, the capital of neighbouring Albania, after his talks with Mr. Rugova and to return to Belgrade Monday.

The new sanctions block foreign investment in Yugoslavia and follow a freeze on its foreign assets last month.

Authoritative Serb sources said the measures could inflict serious damage on the Yugoslav economy.

Kosovo belongs to Serb but ethnic Albanians make up 90 per cent of its 1.8 million population and Serbs are reluctant to live there.

Mr. Holbrooke's intervention indicated fear in Western capitals that fighting in Kosovo between Serb police and ethnic Albanian guerrillas of the Kosovo

Liberation Army (KLA) could grow into a full-blown war.

The KLA already commands a swathe of central and southwest Kosovo and ethnic Albanian political leaders have refused to talk to the Serbs without a foreign mediator to guarantee fair play.

Mr. Holbrooke, who this month failed to broker a peace agreement between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus, underlined the dangers posed by the Kosovo conflict but was careful not to apportion blame.

He told reporters the situation, in which at least 150 people have been killed this year, was "serious enough to merit close attention" and added: "One might say it has elements of extreme

MPs, journalists injured as police storm rally in western Kenya

NAIROBI (AFP) — Ten members of parliament and two journalists were injured, some seriously, when police forcibly dispersed a rally in western Kenya Saturday, the Kenyan press reported Sunday.

The injured included outspoken assistant minister and Cherangani MP Kipruto Arap Kirwa and two other members of the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU), John Sambu and William Ruto, as well as seven opposition MPs.

Opposition Social Democratic Party MP for Nairobi's Dagoretti constituency, Beth Mugo, was hit five times over the head with batons at the rally at Sabwani Primary School in Rift Valley's Kwana constituency.

Several other people, including two journalists working for the opposition weekly People newspaper — Johana Wandeto and Wanyama Chiburi — were also seriously injured in the fracas, which erupted when the police declared the rally illegal and moved in to disperse it.

The rally had been called by the local MP and top opposition FORD-Kenya official, lawyer George Kaptein, to discuss insecurity, cattle raids and land allocation in the North Rift Valley region.

There has been a country-wide outcry over the current security problems in the North Rift Valley and con-

Taiwan successfully tests missile

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan has successfully tested a French-made Mica missile in preparation for a military exercise next week, the China Times reported Sunday.

Military authorities have described the planned four-day exercise as routine in an apparent attempt to minimise damage to relations with China.

The air-to-air missile, launched by a Mirage fighter, hit a mock target Friday in the rehearsal off southern Taiwan, the report said.

It was the first time the Mica had been tested outside France, the report said, adding that Taiwan had bought 960 of the missiles.

The rehearsal, supervised by Chief of the General Staff Tang Fei, also tested two pilotless aircraft and the test firing of sea-to-sea Harpoon missiles launched by six Knox-class frigates.

The live-fire war game codenamed "Han Kuang 14" (Han Glory) will be staged in Hualien and Tainan in eastern Taiwan from Monday to Thursday, the report said.

Military spokesman Kung Fan-Ding said that the annual exercise was designed to combat the threat of a Chinese invasion.

It will test the air defence and anti-landing capability of the three branches of the armed forces deployed on part of the nationalised island, Mr. Kung said this week.

Relations between Taiwan and China soured following a U.S. visit by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui in mid-1995. Beijing opposes any overseas trip by leaders of the island, which it insists is part of its territory.

China broke off talks and held six rounds of missile tests and war games near the island during the run-up to Taiwan's first democratic presidential election in the spring of 1996.

The deadlock remained until February when China sent a letter to Taiwan agreeing on a resumption of visits by negotiators and of talks.

Sweeping health strides made but poverty still biggest killer — WHO

GENEVA (AFP) — Sweeping strides in health have improved the lives of millions over the past 50 years, but rampant poverty still remains the biggest threat to longevity, the World Health Organisation said early Monday.

"Overall, remarkable improvements in health have been due to socio-economic development," outgoing WHO Director General Hiroshi Nakajima told journalists at the launch of the organisation's World Health Report 1998.

"There is a global optimism," said the Japanese chief who steps down in July after 10 years in the post.

The report, the third in a series begun in 1995, points out that more people than ever before have access to at least minimum health care, safe water supplies and sanitation facilities.

Infant mortality rates have dropped during the last half century, average life expectancy has shot up to 66 years from 48 in 1950 and many people can look forward to an extended healthy old age.

"Because of health interventions and the increase in technology, we have been able to leapfrog the basic economic development process, and offer the poorest of the poor education, information and new technologies," Ralph Henderson, WHO assistant director general told journalists.

"The majority of the world's population has a terrific potential ahead of it, to make it so that the later years are the best years of all of our lives."

But poverty is still the biggest indirect killer.

"Hundreds of millions of people in the Third World are still trapped in poverty

where the burdens of ill-health, disease, and inequality are heaviest, where the outlook is bleakest and life is shortest," says Mr. Nakajima.

Some gaps in health between rich and poor are at least as wide as half a century ago and becoming wider still, warns the WHO.

Life expectancy in some countries, particularly in Africa, is actually declining.

"It is still a tragedy we are getting this gap between the

rich and poor," Mr. Henderson said. This year, some 21 million people will die prematurely, most of them in the Third World.

"Reducing these premature deaths is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity at the dawn of the 21st century," says the report.

The tally will include ten million children under the age of five and 7.5 million men and women between 20 and 49 "in what should be some of the best and

most productive years of their lives."

Most of these early deaths are preventable, with at least two million children a year dying from diseases for which there are vaccines.

Over one third of the global population still lacks access to essential drugs, and in developing countries in 1996, just 40 per cent of live births were delivered in clinics or hospitals and just about half had any professional help at delivery.

Nearly 600,000 women, mainly in the developing world, die each year in pregnancy or childbirth.

"It is time to realise that health is a global issue. It should be considered as an essential component of the continuing globalisation process that is reshaping our world," Mr. Nakajima said.

Mr. Henderson said the report aims to reach out to the majority of the world's populations, and parents in particular.

Unless their children begin to adopt better lifestyles, they can look forward to a longer life, but a disability-ridden life.

"The message is, if we can change some of those behaviours — and we are talking about diet, addictive substances, and sexual health — we can look forward to a terrific old age."

Mr. Nakajima said one his main concerns was the "double burden" of infectious and non-communicable diseases such as cancer — increasingly affecting both the developed and the developing worlds.

Infectious and parasitic diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria and diarrhoea, are still the biggest killers among adults in much of the developing world, accounting for 43 per cent of total deaths in these nations last year.

Deaths from new scourges are also making inroads. AIDS claimed 2.3 million lives in 1997, becoming the fourth biggest infectious disease killer and the tally is likely to rise annually.

The good news for developing countries is that by 2025, infectious diseases such as poliomyelitis, leprosy, guinea-worm disease, filariasis and hepatitis B, which together disable hundreds of millions of people, will have been eliminated or reduced in incidence.

Salsa star helps former Venezuela Miss Universe launch presidential bid

CARACAS (AFP) — Former Miss Universe Irene Saez formally launched her bid for the Venezuelan presidency in a massive party here with live music provided by salsa great Oscar de Leon.

Ms. Saez, the 1981 Miss Universe and currently the popular mayor of the Caracas suburb of Chacao, is one of the top three candidates in presidential elections to be held Dec. 6.

Ms. Saez is running as a candidate for a new party which goes by the acronym IRENE.

The former glam queen's political party will search for ways to "unite the country," Ms. Saez said in her acceptance speech to the crowd Saturday.

Most of her speech was spent on explaining her political platform, which is based on an improving the government "without violence and with justice and liberty."

Ms. Saez promised to lower inflation, open feeding centres for children and pregnant women, and improve health care and housing in poor neighbourhoods.

She also promised clear business rules for investors and no new taxes, as well as money to beef up the government's tax collecting bureau-

Mexico City records hottest weather of the century

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexico City roared in the hottest temperatures of the century Saturday, with the Mercury recorded at 34.7 degrees Celsius.

The highest temperature of the day was 34.7 degrees Celsius at the (Benito Juarez) airport, for the hottest (day) of the century in Mexico City, the city's environment ministry said in a statement.

Officials have warned temperatures could soar higher in other parts of the high-altitude city and surrounding areas, home to some 18 million people.

In the northern industrial city of Monterrey, temperatures reached nearly 45 C Friday.

Dry air and heat in recent weeks have proved a lethal

Indonesian given hero's sendoff amid call for reform

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia (AFP) — Hundreds of mourners united in grief here Sunday for the funeral of a man many of them never knew, and who was laid to rest under a wreath of flowers bearing the clarion call "reform."

Moses Gatotkaca, an unemployed worker, has become an unlikely symbol of the student movement — allegedly beaten to death on Friday by security forces as he stopped for some dinner in Yogyakarta.

In the small, walled Conkok cemetery some 10 kilometres outside the city, hundreds of mourners gathered to pay their respects to a man who, some believe, could become the movement's first martyr.

Gathered at the graveside were huge floral tributes, one sent from opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, the ousted leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party.

Mourners bent their heads

in front of a wreath of palm leaves and pink bougainvillea which bore the simple testament: "There is only one word reform."

At times during the brief ceremony, mourners raised their fists defiantly, shouting "Allah Akbar" (God is Great) and calling for Gatotkaca's death not to be in vain.

Gatotkaca's grieving adoptive mother Ida Sukardjo said her son had not been involved in the student protests which have rocked this central Javanese city, saying he had been the victim of an unprovoked beating Friday by two policemen.

According to a doctor quoted by the state-run news agency Antara, the 39-year-old unemployed technical engineer was hit so hard over the head that his skull cracked.

Student protests started in February. In past weeks, growing numbers of people have been swelling their

ranks to clamour for political and economic reforms. One of the mourners, who read a poem at the graveside under trees heavy with sweet-smelling white blossom, said Gatotkaca was a "hero who died in war."

He bore a hero's name in life — that of the mythical Gatotkaca who is tossed into a volcano as a child and survives, and learns to fly to fight for good in the Javanese adaptation of the Indian saga of the Mahabharata. A 22-year-old student from the Indonesian Islamic University, who identified himself only as Dee, said Gatotkaca's death would strengthen the students' will to fight. But his distraught mother said after the short ceremony at the Conkok cemetery: "We don't want any more violence or injuries. I feel anger deep in my heart at the government. I feel so lost. I hope he hasn't died in

"Why does the government use violence against the people. The people don't have any arms."

An Islamic religious leader stood in the grave saying a final prayer for Gatotkaca, while a mourner carried a crude wooden cross bearing his name and birth date and another a framed photo. Handfuls of dirt were tossed into the grave as mourners stood sometimes with their heads bowed, sometimes with their fists raised.

Afterwards, sitting on another grave and fighting back tears, his adoptive mother said: "Please tell your country what has happened here." President Suharto should resign, she said in answer to a question.

"Almost all the people here are asking for that and all of them are really hoping that it will bring peace."

As she headed home, she voiced one last wish: "I hope no harm will come to me."

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Lobbying for end of sanctions

THE CURRENT Iraqi diplomatic offensive which includes Foreign Minister Mohammad Sahhaf's visit to Amman and other emissaries to other Arab and non-Arab capitals seeks to explain Baghdad's position towards the crippling sanctions imposed on that country since 1990 and to lobby for their lifting. According to the latest figures, Iraq's economy has lost about \$140 billion worth of goods, commodities, equipment and services that would have been imported with oil money since the end of the Gulf war.

But most drastic is the figure of 1.5 million Iraqis, mostly children, who have died due to lack of food and medicine caused by the embargo.

Jordan has long been calling for the lifting of the U.N. economic sanctions against Baghdad. His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan have hardly missed an opportunity to raise the issue of the suffering of the Iraqi people before any international forum they have attended or any world leader they have met since 1991.

Jordanians from all walks of life, from leaders to students, from businessmen to unionists, have always demanded that the crippling sanctions be lifted.

Meanwhile, human rights organisations, NGOs and an increasing number of humanitarian and religious groups worldwide have joined Arab and non-Arab countries in their call for lifting the sanctions.

The EU member states have declared on many occasions their opposition to a continuation of the embargo.

Opposition to the embargo against Iraq is also mounting inside the U.S. Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark on Friday headed a delegation of prominent human rights activists to Baghdad in defiance of what he described as "the genocidal and murderous conduct" of his own government.

The U.S. administration is becoming more and more isolated in its campaign for maintaining the embargo and is running the risk of having to deal with this "international dispute" alone.

Before that happens, and more innocent children die, it would be more convenient for both the U.S. and Iraq to try to reactivate the long-silent communication channels between them. The Iraqi leadership has recently renewed its call for a direct dialogue with the U.S., a proposal that King Hussein floated in March. Dialogue, Mr. Sahhaf said yesterday upon arrival in Amman, "is the civilised, most productive way in politics to tackle problems and resolve issues pending between two nations."

The U.N., the world body in charge of preserving peace, justice, and human rights, can no longer justify the human loss caused by the sanctions.

Legal disputes on whether maintaining the embargo is lawful or not appear moot, in front of the petrifying pictures of desperate mothers helplessly agonising over their dying babies.

No matter the varied arguments that politicians formulate and produce to keep the sanctions, nobody will ever be able to bide the fact that this embargo is a flagrant violation of the first of all basic rights to which all men and women are entitled — the right to life.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab said Sunday the world expects the U.S. president to return the insult which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has directed at him by rejecting his call for a meeting in Washington and by behaving towards the U.S. envoy Dennis Ross in a very humiliating manner. But the writer said that in reality the U.S. president is not expected to make such a move and will further succumb to Israel's conditions and dictates and will refuse the American hegemony. In light of such developments Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat insisted that the tripartite summit which President Bill Clinton had suggested be held on schedule, noted the writer. He said while Netanyahu behaved very negatively towards Washington and its peace mediation, Arafat acted very positively towards the U.S. and its bids to bring about a settlement. The writer said that as long as the U.S. Congress blindly backs Israel, no progress can be achieved in the Middle East peace process.

Al Ra'i's Tawfiq Abul Rub addressed the proposed national conference on unemployment saying that a solution to the problem is bound to end many of the social ills plaguing Jordan at present. The writer said that no doubt many researchers and economists as well as government officials will submit working papers and ideas for solving this chronic issue and this is quite understandable in view of the fact that almost every home in Jordan has some kind of complaint connected to unemployment. He said that a solution to this issue is bound to reduce the number of crimes, robberies and even murders and is bound to enhance stability especially since a solution can bring new hopes to the youth who constitute the future of Jordan. The writer said that the more the number of graduates from universities the more complicated the unemployment crisis becomes and so it is imperative to hold this conference or other relevant meetings to address the situation.

Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Lessons in privatisation from Latin America

IN THE privatisation debate several economists choose to give examples of South American countries as places where the privatisation experience has gone sour. Argentina and Mexico were cited during the Jordanian parliamentary debate of the Government Privatisation Plan. Argentina was cited by at least one economist as a representative of the bad effects of privatisation, Chile was another and so forth. However, current literature on the economies of Latin America, and these countries in particular, presents a totally different view point.

In fact, because of the economic reforms that took place in Latin America (and in spite of the Asian crisis, which caused some foreign investors to hesitate and even withdraw their investments) the economic growth rate is expected to be 4.5 per cent this year, and inflation is expected to remain below 10 per cent. New share issues by the firms in the region will total \$6 billion in 1998 and are expected to grow by 25 per cent to \$8 billion next year. The outlook can hardly be viewed as gloomy!

But that was not always the case. For almost half a century because of big government — among other things, Latin America was indeed a hotbed of strife. In the 1940s, many of the state companies of Latin America grew out of the corruption of state officials who, acting in cahoots with private businesses, saw in state-owned enterprises a way of siphoning off taxpayers' money through padded government contracts granting them cheap raw materials and state resources. These companies continued to grow until the mid-eighties, receiving support from several groups: the generals of the national armed forces who saw in them a means for maintaining national security; trade unions who supported the job-creation scheme; and, of course, the leftists. As expected, corruption turned many of these companies into multi-billion-dollar liabilities. And, as would also be expected, most of the privatisation activity in Latin America was out of the need to improve the governments' accounts and not some ideological zeal.

Latin America privatised at a very high speed. (The Economic Commission for Latin America stated in a

recent report that foreign direct investment replaced banks in Latin America as the principal source of financing.) In the past 10 years, 279 companies in the largest seven Latin American economies were sold for \$90 billion. Between 1990-95, the value of privatisation transactions in Latin America accounted for more than half of the total value of privatisation transactions in the developing world, including the active markets of Central and Eastern Europe. Chile and Mexico were the pioneers followed by Argentina and Peru and lately Brazil, which is fast catching up.

Argentina, cited by some in Jordan as a desolate country, is enjoying an 8 per cent growth and a continuous growth period of 18 months; it looks forward to a 5.8 per cent growth rate for 1998 which cannot be shunned by any standard. Its GDP stood at \$320 billion in 1997 with worldwide exports valued at \$26.5 billion. Its budget deficit is down to 1 per cent of GDP and current account deficit is 2.5 per cent of GDP.

The Economist, in its December issue last year, reported that Argentina managed to lower its unemployment rate down from 18.4 per cent in 1995 to 13.8 per cent in 1997.

But the Argentina of the mid-1980s had a different story to tell. That Argentina, whose state-owned companies accounted for only 6.28 per cent of GDP was suffering, mainly because these firms managed to create annual losses of 5.6 per cent of GDP between 1983-85. Such losses were indeed crippling to the Argentine economy.

Let's view what happened in some of the sectors that were privatised in Argentina. For example, Argentina used to have an extremely bad telephone service (renowned as the worst in South America), such that firms used to hire people for the sole function of holding the telephone handset for hours to wait for a dial tone. It has now two companies: Telecom (in which Stet, France Telecom, and Argentina's Perez own large stakes) and Telefonica (which is owned by the large Spanish firm known by the same name). Both companies have 6-year

monopolies in their geographic regions, joint control of long distance telephony and the right to operate mobile telephone services. The two firms did a good job of upgrading the industry by investing close to \$5 billion with a 100 per cent digital network and 4700 km of fiber-optic cable. The World Bank reckons that to grow by five per cent a year Latin America needs to spend \$60 billion on new infrastructure annually. (A side note: at a recent seminar a World Bank report indicated that a country in the MENA region can experience an economic growth of one additional percentage point by increasing the stock of its infrastructure by 1 per cent per annum.)

This is a remarkable deal, which can only be achieved through greater private sector participation in the provision of infrastructure. Other examples of successful privatisation include Mexico, which had 1115 state-owned companies in 1982 that received transfers and subsidies in the neighbourhood of 12.7 per cent of GDP from the government. Chile in two privatisation rounds in the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s privatised firms with sales equal to 13 per cent of GDP. Peru has privatised companies since 1990 with sales equal to 11 per cent of GDP.

One could go on and on citing the different achievements of the Latin American countries in the area of privatisation and the positive impact that it has had on these economies. Most significantly, these economies provide examples of privatisation as being a means to ending a difficult situation and not the reverse. Addressing the haphazardly thrown negative examples of the effects of privatisation and searching for counter examples wastes valuable strategic time that Jordan may not have.

Critics and policy-makers alike must not believe that privatisation is to be carried out in a two-dimensional space (Jordan as seller, and the buyer who may be local or foreign); it is at least a three-dimensional issue: seller, buyer and another seller.

Chances are being wasted and fortunes may be squandered in recklessly obstinate debates. Let's not wait too long.

Ideology as science

The political economy of 'bantustanisation' in Palestine

By Aisling Byrne

A QUARTER of the way through 1998, forecasts for Palestinian political and economic scenarios are bad: the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit's Third Quarter Country Report for Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories "Outlook for 1997-98" makes gloom reading: "Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank is likely to be minimal, and violence is expected to result from Palestinian frustration. The U.S. remains the only broker with influence but will not use it to pressure Israel, thus making progress in Israeli-Palestinian talks unlikely." And, David Horowitz, managing editor of the Jerusalem Report, warns that with Israel "sliding inexorably to the right, Arafat's bottom lip trembling more by the week... his aides are denying rumours of terminal illness while his ministers and security chiefs quietly battle to succeed him... the Palestinian economy is in far worse shape than before the Oslo accords." In fact, a recent U.N. report described the years 1992-1996 as "the worst period in recent history" as far as "long-term future prospects of the private sector and growth of exports" are concerned.

A major cause of these seriously deteriorating economic conditions are the political and socio-political changes that have occurred in the past five years. Ideology has a tendency to pass itself off as science, camouflaging the political context within which economic policy-making occurs. Current economic activity has turned into the economics of "bantustanisation." Like a pressure cooker, the temperature is turned up and down as required, and as and when necessary, the lid is put firmly on. Both the under-development and disrepair of the Palestinian economy by Israel and the idealism and self-reliance of the intifada by Palestinians has given way to a more finely tuned set-up of policy-making — both political and economic — by remote control. As Israeli analyst Meron Benvenisti explains: "The occupation continues, albeit by remote control, and with the consent of the Palestinian people. It goes without saying that 'cooperation' based on the current power relationship is no more than permanent Israeli domination in disguise, and that Palestinian self-rule is merely a euphemism for bantustanisation."

It is in this context that economic policy-making and supposed economic "development" must be viewed: for without taking due account of the political, social and other contextual realities of the current situation, one could be deluded into thinking that the establishment of a Palestinian state will put an end to the historical conflict and that economic development will then take off.

The current stage of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination is occurring with-

in an international context of globalisation — political, economic and cultural: a "new times" context where the illusory terminology of post-modernism is used to justify things that seem not to be what they are, or seem to be what they are not. Although terminology may suggest otherwise, in Palestine the occupation continues in all but name. Support for the creation of a Palestinian state in patchwork form is increasingly loud and clear, from the likes of Ariel Sharon, leaders from right-wing and settler parties, and across the board from Labour, Likud and other parties — including in the U.S. — with mere "arithmetical" differences of opinion on its size.

New bureaucratic elite

A critical factor here is the emergence and increasing prominence of "neopatrimonial" socio-political forces in Palestine that are often one and the same as top Palestinian [National] Authority (PNA) officials, including officials in the security services and PNA economic advisers. According to Palestinian political analyst Ali Jarbawi, "the growth of the PNA bureaucracy, mainly funded by donor countries, has given rise to a new privileged class and new political loyalties... which has led to a split within Fateh with political power shifting gradually to this new bureaucratic elite, which will progressively replace it as the ruling political party," a process that has already begun. And as "the centre of Palestinian political life shifts from the 'outside' to the 'inside' there is a reconfiguration of the basis of the political process, which will henceforth derive from the reality and constraints of life inside Palestine." And these "neopatrimonial," or "tribal," forces have forged links in Israel. As Benvenisti comments: "Nations that do not have conflicting interests have nothing to conduct negotiations over."

The "opportunities" and context provided by the Oslo process for this new elite — the establishment and management of a plethora of monopolies for example — are thus perhaps not unintentional. And the prevailing political culture, which creates the corruption that in turn corrodes the legitimacy of political leadership, is sustained by popular despair.

Economic policy is geared, to a large extent, to the "neopatrimonial use of resources," according to Canadian academic Rex Brynen. "Formal lines of responsibility are overwritten by patronage and clientelism, and the boundaries of public role and private interest are blurred, with public office representing an important mechanism of private rent-seeking: state resources are used to lubricate patron-client networks while, at the same time, the state's ability to extract resources and regulate behaviour

creates conditions under which the supply of and access to scarce goods can be manipulated — the fundamental foundation of the power of patronage."

And despite its efforts, the Palestinian Legislative Council's attempts have, to date, been largely futile. "The executive is trying to undermine the Legislative Council by keeping it out of the final status negotiations and by curtailing its ability to hold the government financially and politically accountable. While the situation remains in flux, the general shape of the 'political map' can already be gleaned from the changes currently under way," Ali Jarbawi said.

Reports in the Palestinian, Israeli and international press have exposed that extent of the corruption and the close connections between top Palestinian and Israeli security, political and economic officials. The June 1997 report of the Palestinian Legislative Council's Economic Committee was highly critical of these practices and the PNA's economic strategy, and it too warned of politically motivated economic management. It highlighted the "absence of any overall supervision of the economy which gives certain ministers the opportunity to call their own personal shots." Most ministries, it noted, "suffer from duplicate internal leadership... the most dangerous aspect of which is the geographical split between the West Bank and Gaza." And although on the fringes, and among the NGO movement, there are small-scale projects and initiatives aimed at development, the effects of current policies and trends are steadily worsening the context within which even these small initiatives can succeed.

The power of the World Bank

Another major player in terms of economics in Palestine is the World Bank (as well as other international financial organisations) which has a largely free hand. Given that Palestine faces somewhat similar conditions to other developing countries, it is important to link the Palestinian experience to that of other countries and analyse to what extent Palestine can learn from their mistakes. The World Bank sets great store by the successful development of economies in the Far East (before December 1997, that is). And simply in terms of generating ideas about economic development, the World Bank is in a powerful position to frame debate with its ability to influence the terms on which low-income countries gain access to international capital markets. It has a research budget far larger than that of any other development organisation and immense influence on the media. Its report The East Asian Miracle is a good illustration of the dangers of economics being presented as "science" and therefore devoid of any political/ideological content. Certainly

Despite the public sector's employment of some 78,000 Palestinians, 35,000 of whom work for one of the PNA's twelve police and security forces — a figure that the IMF predicted would grow by nine per cent in 1997 — the PNA's deputy minister of economics said proudly in June 1997: "I think that the inflation of the government's bureaucracy is one of the authority's great economic achievements. Where would all these people find work if we had not made them clerks?"

This article is a summary of a paper, *Economic Relations and Economic Development: A political economy analysis, given at a conference organised by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in Gaza, in December 1997.*

— Middle East International

For the sake of that vote

To the editor:

WHEN ONE follows the reaction, or more correctly the political antics, of U.S. politicians, whether in connection with the ongoing and increasingly frustrating peace-process, or the advent of the 50th anniversary of the creation of Israel (the Israelis have the impertinence of calling it liberation); one cannot but feel a sense of disgust at the capacity of U.S. politicians to brush aside the moral and humanitarian principles on which the United States of America was established. They ignore the basic principles of human rights, including the right of self-determination, and principles of international law which these politicians profess to believe in, and indulge in the most base of opportunistic practice to please the "minority vote" that might get them into office; and to tell with the Palestinian people and whoever else might get in the way!

LETTERS

To mention but a few very telling examples: When Vice-President Al Gore (a presidential aspirant) visited Israel to celebrate its 50th anniversary, he allowed himself to declare that Jerusalem was the united and everlasting capital of Israel! No matter that east Jerusalem is occupied territory according to U.N. Security Council resolutions. In effect the U.S. vice-president was publicly encouraging violation of international law and encouraging aggression, with the obvious and certain favourable effect on the Jewish lobby back home?

The U.S. administration has not had the courage to officially declare that it supports the 13.1 per cent deployment of Israeli troops from the occupied West Bank, and thus has left Israel more leverage to manoeuvre on the flimsy pretext of security (which incidentally has no legitimacy in international law) and build more settlements and manipulate the demography of the occupied territories in violation of relevant Geneva conven-

tions. This is an obvious conspiracy to encroach on more Palestinian turf. And such is the bly-livered approach of the U.S. administration towards Israeli defiance of Security Council resolutions. But when other countries violate international law, they are treated to a barrage of cruise missiles and Stealth aircraft. The double-standards are not lost on the people in the area, leaving those who desire peace with a very weak argument.

All hell broke loose when the courageous and principled first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, declared in Geneva that the Palestinian people had the right to statehood. Such non-conformism was unforgivable! All the fuss of course was in deference to the Jewish vote. These and many other nauseating examples of pandering to the "vote" continue to manifest themselves. As for many prominent members of the U.S. Congress, they may as well be sitting in the Israeli Knesset. Such indignities are unbecoming of such a great nation.

Omar Abbas
 Amman

مكتبة امين

A quarter century later, scholarly investigations continue to unravel secrets of earliest towns along south-east Dead Sea coast

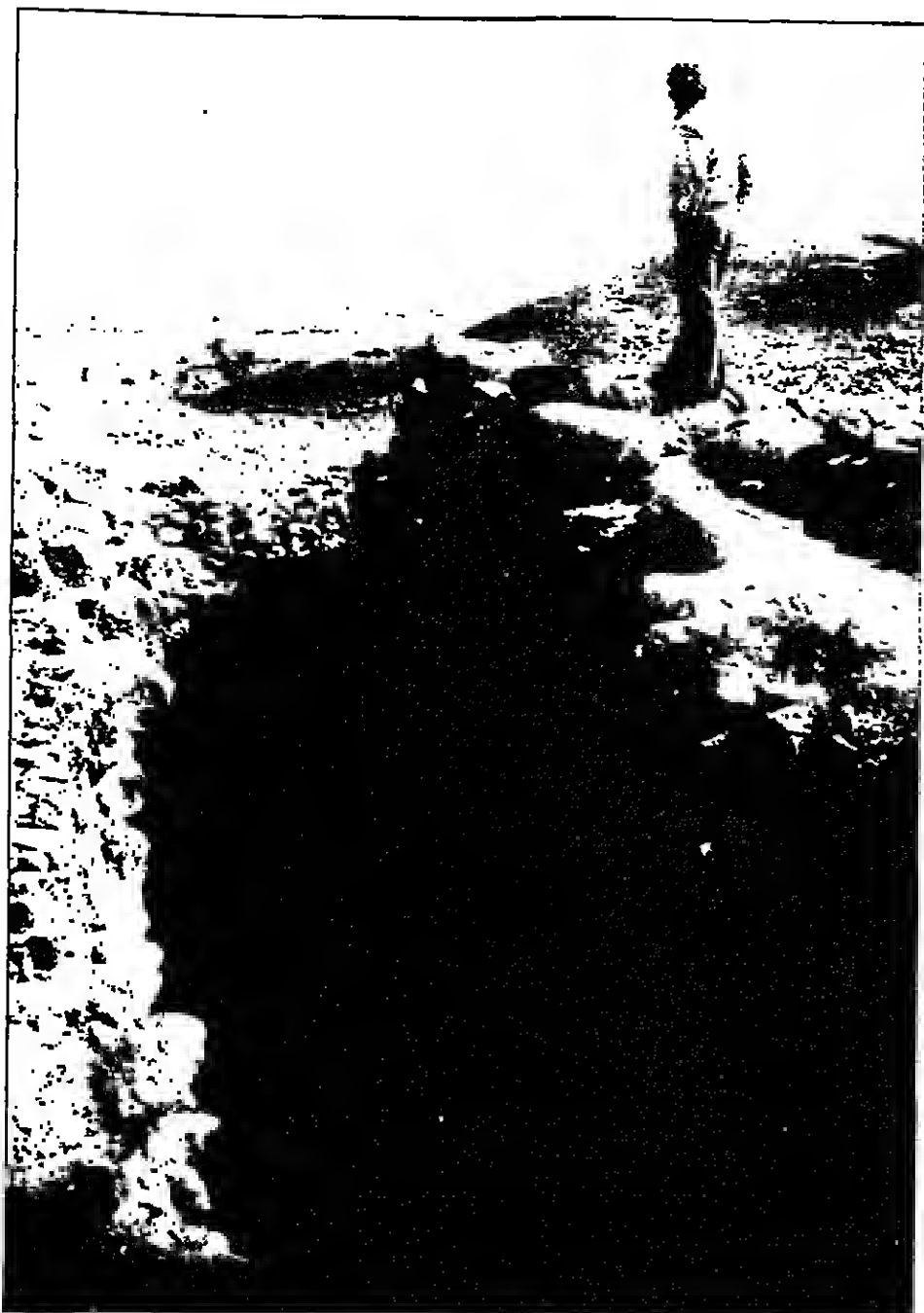
Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles on the last 25 years of work in the Southern Ghors region along the south-east Dead Sea coast. Today's article examines the major site of Bab edh-Dhra'. Upcoming articles will review the results of recent scholarly work at Numaira, Safi, Feifeh, Khneizira, Mazra'a, and other sites in the area, and consider the question of whether the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah and other Cities of the Plain may be located in this area.

THE AREA along the south-east shore of the Dead Sea, from the Lisan Peninsula to just south of the Dead Sea, is known in English as the Southern Ghors (el-ghwar el-junubiyeh, in Arabic). The ghwar (singular: ghora) are the fertile plains along the Dead Sea shoreline, formed by the deposition of alluvial material where the side wadis enter the valley floor. The name Southern Ghors, the Jordan Valley Authority's official designation for this region, is commonly used to delineate the stretch from Haditha village at the north end of the Lisan Peninsula, to Wadi Khneizira, at the south end of the Dead Sea.

The Lisan ('tongue' in Arabic) is a desolate, washed-out area of hills and wadis formed by the Lisan marl that was deposited in the area in the past. The Ghors vary between 320 and 400 metres below sea level, and the area's population and economic activities are both increasing rapidly. The Southern Ghors have been surveyed by archaeologists, geologists and mineralogists for nearly 200 years, ever since the German explorer Ulrich Seetzen visited the area in 1805/6, followed by Robinson (1834), Irby and Mangles (1816), de Saulcy (1848), Lynch (1850) and Musil (1898-1902). W.F. Albright explored the Southern Ghors and did some soundings at Bab edh-Dhra' and Safi in the early 1920s. Father Alexis Mallon of the Franciscans explored the area as a member of Albright's team, and is credited with discovering the site of Bab edh-Dhra'. The area was surveyed in 1932-33 by Fritz Frank of Germany, and in 1934 by Nelson Glueck of the United States. The American archaeologist Dr. Paul Lapp first excavated at Bab edh-Dhra' in 1965-67. Other surveys in the region have been carried out since the 1960s by Hans-Dieter Kind, Dr. David McCreery, Dr. William J. G. M. de Vries, Dr. Andreas Hauptmann, Dr. Geoffrey King, Mr. Tom Raikes, Dr. Udo Worschech, and Dr. Burton MacDonald. Dr. Walter Rast of Valparaiso University (USA) and Dr. R. Thomas Schaub of Indiana State University surveyed the entire Southern Ghors and the northern Wadi Araba in 1973, before starting their excavations at Bab edh-Dhra' and Numaira. Their work has continued without interruption for the past quarter of a century, and this series of articles draws heavily on their findings and their kind cooperation.

The Expedition to the Dead Sea Plain

The Expedition to the Dead Sea Plain in Jordan is a regional project dedicated to exploring a series of archaeological sites from the late fourth through the third millennium (3500 to 2000 B.C.). A survey season in 1973 and six field seasons at the sites of Bab



Above, part of the excavated city wall of Bab edh-Dhra'. Below, one of the Early Bronze Age complexes of same

edh-Dhra', Numaira, Feifa and Khanazir 'have aimed primarily to collect reliable archaeological data for understanding the interaction of environmental, economic, technological and population determinants for the life and settlement patterns of this region,' Dr. Rast and Dr. Schaub told the Jordan Times in a recent interview in Amman. The expedition has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Geographic Society, numerous grants from the universities and colleges of staff members and many generous individual donors. Bab edh-Dhra' site, one and a half kilometres east of the Kerak — Southern Ghors road junction is the largest of the known town sites from the Early Bronze Age in this region — the walled town of Bab edh-Dhra'. It is set back about 150 metres north of the Kerak road, among rolling hills easily visible from the road. The 3rd millennium B.C. town and cemetery were identified in 1924 by Mallon and Albright, first excavated by Paul Lapp in the mid-1960s, and since examined in depth by Rast and Schaub.

The 1973 survey showed that Bab edh-Dhra' was the largest and northernmost of a line of Early Bronze Age town sites along the south-east shore of the Dead Sea. Two of these, Bab edh-Dhra' and Numaira, had similar internal layouts, and were located atop promontories overlooking the Dead Sea. They were also adjacent to fertile agricultural lands and had good sources of fresh water nearby. The surveys throughout the Southern Ghors have identified over 30 Early Bronze Age sites, including several large cemeteries and at least two other walled sites. The Bab edh-Dhra' site was inhabited for about a thousand years in the Early Bronze Age (3300 — 2000 B.C.). During that time, the nature and extent of the human presence changed, and a proper walled town only existed

on the site for about 500 years. The perennial waters of Wadi Kerak, north of the site, and several springs in the immediate vicinity probably meant that Bab edh-Dhra' was an ancient watering spot for pastoral nomads or perhaps even for small groups of travellers on the valley — highlands route through Wadi Kerak. The first people to settle at Bab edh-Dhra' seem to have been a transient community of pastoral nomads who set up seasonal camps during the EB IA period (c. 3300-3050 B.C.). They may have lived in simple hut-like shelters or in tents, which gradually expanded over the area of low hills that would eventually evolve into an open village and finally a walled town. The EB IA people were the first to bury their dead in subterranean shaft and chamber tombs in the nearby cemetery. The cemetery is located less than a kilometre away, south of the Kerak road and just west of the potash company township.

The first underground shaft tombs typically included a 3-4-metre-deep and one-metre-diameter circular shaft dug through compact alluvial gravel and into the soft Lisan marl. From the base of the shaft, openings radiated out into one, two, three, four or five dome-shaped burial chambers, each with a narrow entrance blocked by stones and sealed with a thick coat of mud mortar. Most of the human remains within the chambers were piles of bones, clearly reflecting disarticulated skeletons that were originally buried elsewhere at the time of death, and later were brought to the Bab edh-Dhra' cemetery for burial in what may have been a family, clan or tribal tomb. The bones were usually placed on a reed mat, and often covered by a shroud of leather skin or textile. Around the bones of the deceased were placed assorted funerary objects, including dozens of pots and other vessels, unbaked clay female figurines, stone mace heads, basalt vessels,

perforated beads, alabaster artefacts, wooden tools, bowls and other stone objects, bone needles, and, perhaps in some cases, food offerings, including grape pips and slabs of meat.

Rast and Schaub feel the secondary burials tend to indicate that the EB IA people were pastoral nomads who buried their



dead when they visited the Bab edh-Dhra' site seasonally, perhaps to take advantage of its water sources. They may have first used the site as a watering hole, then as a cemetery, and finally as a seasonal campsite. An extensive investigation of this phase of the Early Bronze Age cemetery at Bab edh-Dhra' was carried out by Dr. Donald Ormer of the Smithsonian Institution, a staff member of the expedition. The settlement had clearly started to develop into a permanent village by the EB IB period, around 3050-2900 B.C., when its inhabitants were building simple rectangular or square houses of mud-bricks on stone foundations. These structures were obviously designed for more than seasonal use, and represent the earliest evidence of year-round occupation of the site. Interior and exterior walls were often plastered,

and roofs of matted sections of clay-plastered reeds rested on wooden poles. The EB IB settlement was an open village, though traces of mud-brick enclosure walls in some exposed lower areas, between the hillocks that dot the site, may perhaps be seen as an early attempt at protecting the settlement against external danger or attack by building a crude fortification wall.

The EB IB community continued to dig shaft tombs, but also buried its dead in circular, mud-brick charnel houses built partly above and partly below the ground. As would be expected when a nomadic community settles down into a permanent village, disarticulated secondary burials largely disappear, and the deceased are buried in the village cemetery immediately after death. The EB IB tombs also show the first signs of successive burials in the same tomb or charnel house, as old burials were dismembered and moved to the sides and backs of burial chambers to make room for new interments. The EB IB people may also have practised communal, rather than family or clan, burials, to economise on the amount of land taken up by burials. Perhaps this reflects new pressures on available land resources, due to the growing size of the village, the land taken up for cultivated agriculture, and the expansion of the cemetery itself. Considerable burning evidence throughout the EB IB village and cemetery, and many skulls with traumatic injuries such as are caused by blows by axes, swords or stone weapons, suggest that the EB IB settlement lived in a period of increased hostility, and eventually came to a violent end. All or some of the EB IB people remained on the site and eventually rebuilt their village into a larger and stronger settlement in the EB II period, whose pottery and other

material measuring 6 x 12 metres was built during EB II, followed by a similar building directly above it in the following phase of EB III. Since the two structures were nearly identical in form and constructed on the same spot, it seems most likely that they are to be interpreted as temples. A semi-circular base just west of the later building was probably the lower section of an altar. The ceilings of both buildings were supported on tall columns made of thick wooden beams. In the lower building, five stone pedestals still supporting parts of wooden beams formed a line through the middle of the sanctuary. Similar cultic complexes have been excavated at other Early Bronze Age sites in Palestine, including Megiddo, Tell Yarmuth and Arad. In the nearby cemetery, the mud-brick charnel houses became larger and rectangular, in some cases measuring 15 x 8 metres and containing over 400 burials. One particularly rich charnel house produced over 500 complete pots. Eleven charnel houses have been excavated, and more than 100 of the earlier shaft tombs. The large cemetery, thought to include at least 500-600 tombs and up to 40 charnel houses, is thought to have been used largely by the residents of Bab edh-Dhra', though ceramic studies indicate that some of the dead were also brought from Numaira, about 14 kilometres to the south. The pottery sequences from the town site and the cemetery have been firmly linked to one another, and the excavators are convinced that the thousands of burials can be attributed to the Bab edh-Dhra' village and town site that was in continuous use for nearly 1,000 years. By about 2600 B.C., during Bab edh-Dhra's era of greatest size and prosperity in the EB III period, the town wall had developed

town, but in its immediate vicinity, and could safely and quickly

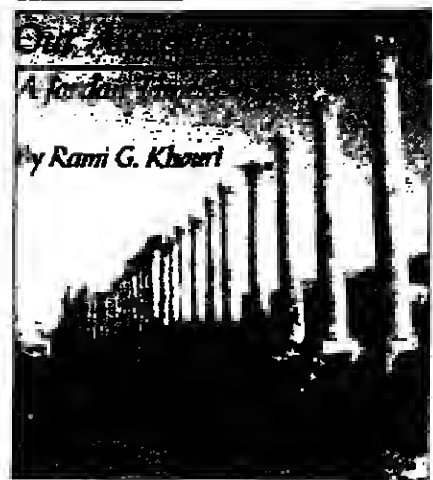
retreat within the walls in times of warfare or danger. A survey of the area adjacent to Bab edh-Dhra' identified 21 archaeological sites, including half a dozen that may be the remains of outlying Early Bronze Age farmsteads or agricultural work areas that related to the walled town. Flotation of plant remains from Bab edh-Dhra' indicates the people were growing and harvesting wheat, barley, grapes, olives, figs, lentils, chickpeas, flax, pistachio, almond and assorted wild plants, with strong evidence that irrigated agriculture was practised, perhaps as early as the EB I period. Bone remains show that animal species at Bab edh-Dhra', whether to be eaten, used as beasts of burden or for other reasons, included sheep and goat, donkey, camel, gazelle, cat, dog, hyena, rodents, lizards or turtles, and possibly some fish and birds. During the EB III period, the inhabitants had to start dealing with the problem of natural erosion of some hills within the walls, which they countered by constructing stone and mud-brick retaining, buttress and terrace walls. The interior of the town was full of houses and public buildings located close to one another, made of mud-bricks often on stone foundations, and probably situated on a series of different levels corresponding to the undulating nature of the terrain. The EB III town (and its satellite community at Numaira) came to a sudden and violent end around 2350 B.C., as a result of either a natural catastrophe, such as an earthquake, or enemy attack. There is evidence to suggest that EB III Bab edh-Dhra' was destroyed by people (known as the EB IV population) who remained on the site for several generations. It is possible that the EB III town collapsed from a combination of economic difficulties, natural catastrophes (earthquake or disease) and perhaps even geological problems, such as severe erosion or drying up of the town's springs. There also may have been something of an ancient energy crisis, for Rast points out that the extensive exploitation of the area's woodlands could not have gone on indefinitely. Dr. David McCreery, who analysed the ancient plant remains, suggests that after more than a thousand years of agricultural activity on the same limited area of cultivable land, soil salinity also may have contributed to the demise of the town.

Whatever ended the EB III town's life, there appears to have been a brief occupational gap until the EB IV period (2350-2000 B.C.), when the site was again inhabited by a community that stayed there for perhaps another 150 years. The EB IV people finally abandoned Bab edh-Dhra' around 2200/2150 B.C., at a time when many other urban sites in Jordan/Palestine were similarly abandoned. At the north end of the site overlooking the Wadi Kerak, excavations revealed a rare EB IV sanctuary comprising a large stone altar which was surrounded by a circular wall of large stones, and an earlier compact rectangular building with finely plastered walls and an entryway with pedestals built into the walls. A small incense stand with a snake motif was found in this sanctu-

ary. In the vicinity of this complex were sheep or goat horns, possibly of sacrificed animals. Though some of the EB IV people settled on the north part of the former walled town, most lived outside the site, particularly in cooler, higher areas to the north-east, close to water sources in nearby wadis. In some cases, they tried to reconstruct and reuse EB III terrace walls within the walled town, probably to counter the damage from natural erosion that had been felt at the site for hundreds of years. Jack Donahue's geological investigations have shown that in the Early Bronze Age, Wadi Kerak was 28 metres higher than its present level, and there was probably a perennial spring towards the south side of the site, within the fortification walls. By the EB IV period, severe erosion, combined with occasional fault movements and uplifting, eroded away much of the northern part of the site, dried up the town's internal spring, and caused two major gullies to ravage much of the area within the walls. For these reasons, when the EB IV people settled on the site, they built most of their dwellings outside the area of the former EB II-III town. They also continued to use the vast cemetery, but reverted to the shaft tomb burials similar to those first employed by the EB I dwellers nearly 1,000 years before (though the EB IV shafts were usually lined with stones from top to bottom). Primary burials were still the rule, with successive interments still causing the displacement of earlier burials to make room for new ones. The difference in burial practices between the EB III and EB IV populations is offset, however, by similarities in their architectural style and construction techniques — keeping very much alive the debate about whether the EB IV people at Bab edh-Dhra' were somehow derived from the EB III community, or were new arrivals from outside the valley.

The site was finally abandoned for good around 2200/2150 B.C., during a period of great upheaval throughout the ancient Middle East. Village and town sites throughout Jordan/Palestine were suddenly vacated during the EB IV period, with the exception of only a handful of known sites in the area (such as Khirbet Iskandar, in Wadi Kerak in the highlands, or Tell Iktanu and Tell Umm Hamad in the Jordan River Valley). Several possible reasons for this widespread decline of urban settlements in the area have been suggested, including climatic changes, disruptions in trade and economic patterns, military attacks, or natural catastrophes such as repeated earthquakes or plagues.

After the Early Bronze Age, Bab edh-Dhra' entered several thousand years of total abandonment, with only the occasional nomad, hunting group or travelling party passing near the site en route to some other destination. But recent archaeological surveys have identified scores of ancient sites in the vicinity of Bab edh-Dhra', particularly in the adjacent Wadi Kerak and Ghor el-Mazra'a, which were inhabited during the Roman, Byzantine and medieval Islamic periods.



By Rami G. Khouri

8 Economy

Bulgarian team ends visit, stresses desire to promote trade exchange with Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Reneta Injova, Bulgaria's former prime minister and head of an economic delegation now visiting Jordan Sunday wound up talks with Jordanian government officials and business leaders with a press conference summing-up the deliberations and stressing her country's determination to promote trade exchanges with the Kingdom.

"We seek to further bol-

ster Jordanian-Bulgarian relations, particularly in economic fields and trade exchanges which last year amounted to JD16 million," said Ms. Injova at the press conference shared with Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Halaiga.

Announcing that the results of her talks here will bear fruit in the coming future, Ms. Injova said there were vast areas for

cooperation especially as the two countries adopt market economy policies and seek to be integrated into the global economy.

Admitting that the Bulgarian-Arab economic relations were modest in the past seven years, Ms. Injova said "the time has come for a new move forward in bilateral ties."

He said the two sides will be holding further meetings soon to bolster cooperation



Reneta Injova and Mohammad Halaiga during the press conference

on projects in the Arab World.

Dr. Halaiga said the Bulgarian delegation expressed interest in buying Jordanian phosphate in barter trade under which Bulgaria will sell Jordan phosphate-mining equipment and machinery.

"The Bulgarians have shown interest in contributing to the construction of electric power plants and supplying cables and in providing Jordan with drilling machinery to help prospect for water and oil in the Kingdom," Dr. Halaiga indicated.

He said the two sides will be holding further meetings soon to bolster cooperation

and boost trade exchanges.

Ms. Injova and her delegation of businessmen earlier held meetings with Jordanian businessmen at the Amman Chamber of Industry on establishing joint investment projects and providing Bulgarian expertise to Jordanian chemical industries and agriculture.

The two sides agreed on intensifying contacts and exchanging visits.

The Bulgarian delegation also met Planning Minister Rima Khalaf Sunday and discussed prospects for investment in Jordan and the privatisation process.

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- Freddy For Music 5692696
- Hotel Meridien 5696511

3 JD

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- Have an excellent command of English.

Applicants should enclose, along with their application forms, a short letter in English stating why they wish to teach Physics at ABS. Computer literacy would be an asset but is not essential.

- 2- Math/Science Special Needs Teacher to teach Grades 6-12.

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Application forms may be obtained from ABS Reception (Tel: 5411191) and must be completed in English and submitted by Wednesday, May 13, 1998, with a recent photo.

Saudi firms urged to recruit locals to ease unemployment

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz has urged the private sector in the kingdom to recruit Saudi nationals to ease unemployment in the country.

"You pay no taxes, there are no taxes on your income. Your country asks you to contribute by recruiting Saudis. It is your duty to the kingdom," the crown prince told members of the Jeddah chamber of commerce and industry.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest producer and exporter of oil, employs up to six million foreign workers usually on lower wages than Saudis, according to unofficial estimates. "The country offers many investment opportunities and many companies and foreign firms want to be involved. I urge you to take advantage of the facilities as you have priority," said the crown prince, quoted by the official SPA news agency.

Saudi Arabia has pledged to create 650,000 new jobs for its nationals by the year 2000, mostly by replacing foreign workers.

Unofficial estimates put Saudi unemployment at around 20 per cent of the active population.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, MAY 11, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Somebody's trying to talk you out of your life savings, or at least what's in your pocket right now. By this afternoon, you'll have settled down a little but you'll still be vulnerable. Get several people to give you financial advice, and proceed with caution.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't argue with your partner this morning. You are more powerful in the situation, but you may also be more impetuous. That might be what your partner is counselling against. You two usually think things over carefully before proceeding. That's a good idea again this time.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you've been having trouble at work lately, maybe it's because you talk too much. Just because you're a cheerful, happy-go-lucky type doesn't mean everyone else is. It's important to learn what to say, when to say it, and whom to say it to. Start by practicing now.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) A person you think is magnificent feels the same about you. Even though you have other responsibilities, you'll still find ways to stay in communication with each other. While you're at it, try to stay out of the direct line of sight of the boss or teacher.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) It seems as if everything you say is contradicted by one person or another. The flip side of the coin is that you're finding fault with just about everything that everyone else says as well. This is good. It will make for a better overall decision, eventually.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A person you think is just marvelous feels the same way back at you. Unfortunately, you don't have time to follow through on your amorous fantasies right now, because you're getting more work all the time. That's OK. You're getting pushed to use your talents.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If you've been worried about money, don't give up hope. People at work have been very supportive lately, so when they give you a good suggestion, don't reject it just because you don't know how you're going to carry it out. You can always learn.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Are you thinking about putting in a swimming pool or a home office, or what? It looks like you want to disrupt things in some way, and your partner is against the idea. If you can prove your scheme is cost-effective, you've got a better chance of winning this argument. Go for it.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Avoid a political struggle with co-workers this morning. You won't talk them out of their opinions. What sells your philosophy best is your cheerful attitude. If you lose that by arguing with people who have their minds made up already, then what will you have?

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Everybody wants your attention. Friends are asking you out, and your sweetheart has special plans for this evening. If this isn't going on, you need to stir things up a bit. Call your friends and let them know you're available. They just got busy and forgot to call.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your job demands that you do one thing, and your roommate or spouse or family wants you to do something else. Think you can ditch them all, and do what you want? It's a Walter Mitty fantasy, but if anybody can do it, it's you, at least for an hour or so.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are charming, charismatic and sensitive. You can tell what other people need and provide it before they even ask. That's even true of a person who lives far away. You could get an intuitive sense that this person needs something from you. If so, call.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

THSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS

- 1 Collapse
- 9 Sailor's jacket
- 15 Head-to-head
- 18 Enticement
- 17 Unattractive quality
- 18 Country estates
- 19 Magic and Mineo
- 20 Title
- 22 As well
- 23 Hot-dog's problem
- 24 Disgracing
- 27 Literary play on words
- 28 Stitch
- 29 Becomes weary
- 30 Scarlett's last name
- 32 Current
- 33 Washington sound
- 34 Bunting and Rathbone
- 37 Curd product
- 38 Delight
- 39 Converts into money
- 42 Parts
- 43 Pronounce
- 44 Wynn and McMahon
- 47 Profit figure
- 48 Writer's blocks
- 50 Conland
- 51 Flara
- 53 Close
- 54 Cordelia's father
- 55 Double-check text
- 57 Bugle signal
- 60 Dismal
- 61 Pull one's punches
- 62 Gives lip
- 63 Allergic

DOWN

- 1 Immerses
- 2 Switch on
- 7 Catch
- 8 Sun seeds
- 9 Poet's portentous bird
- 10 Samuel's teacher
- 11 Fitzgerald or Raines
- 12 Complete sheet
- 13 Eliminations
- 14 Resound
- 21 Highland haze
- 24 Most hackneyed
- 25 Successful punches
- 26 Ground squirrels
- 31 Color gradations
- 32 Less caloric, in ads
- 34 Malamud and Banuch
- 39 Erno Rubik's toy
- 40 On the loose
- 52 Yellow and Black, e.g.
- 54 Bart Simpson's

Peanuts

SOME KID OVER AT THE PLAYGROUND PUSHED ME OFF THE SWING. I WANT YOU TO TEACH HIM A LESSON.

WHERE IS HE NOW?

HERE... I BROUGHT HIM HOME SO YOU CAN HIT HIM.

Andy Capp

I'M A BIT JEALOUS WHEN I DO MY STUFF ON A SUNDAY MORNING ASLEEP.

GRRR-RRR

WHEN HE DOES HIS STUFF THEY DON'T JUST STAY AWAKE, THEY PRAY.

Mutt'n' Jeff

HEY WAITER! I ORDERED A STEAK!

I GAVE IT TO YOU, SIR!

THERE IS NO STEAK HERE, SIR!

ON MY PLATE, I DON'T SEE ANY STEAK!

IT'S BEHIND THE SHEET! ROTATO! ROTATO! THE STEAK IS BEHIND!

WHAT? THE ONE SHEET MEANT TO ROTATE THE STEAK BEHIND?

I DON'T SEE ANY STEAK BEHIND!

STAND BEHIND!

HEY CHEF! YOU'RE GIVIN A STEAK BEHIND!

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN 4-14

"I didn't think you'd mind if I taped over our wedding. You've already watched it, haven't you?"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Arfken

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SUIGE

MYRIG

ENBATE

LIEDEY

A MISSING BRUSH LEFT THE BEAUTY QUEEN LIKE THIS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the word.

Business

A review of news

Arab Banking Corp operating profit but

ALTHOUGH THE Arab Banking Corporation (ABC) reported a net profit of \$1.5 million for the first quarter of 1998, its operating profit was \$1.2 million. The company's revenue for the quarter was \$10.5 million, compared with \$10.2 million in the same quarter of 1997. The profit was mainly due to an increase in interest income and a decrease in provisions for bad debts. The company's assets under management stood at \$1.2 billion at the end of the quarter, up from \$1.1 billion at the end of the previous quarter. The ABC is a public company listed on the Jordanian Stock Exchange.

Quality management for standards

THE JORDANIAN STANDARDS AND METROLOGY AUTHORITY (JMSA) has issued a call for the implementation of the ISO 9000 quality management system. The JMSA is the national body responsible for the development and implementation of standards in Jordan. It has issued a series of standards for various sectors, including manufacturing, services, and construction. The ISO 9000 system is a set of international standards for quality management systems. It is designed to help organizations improve the quality of their products and services, and to ensure that they are consistent with customer requirements. The JMSA is currently working on the implementation of the ISO 9000 system in Jordan, and is encouraging organizations to adopt the system.

THE BUSINESS OF

Major Currencies & Cross Rates				
USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
1.7708	0.8100	1.4786	1.4786	133.75
0.8547	1.3448	0.8348	0.8348	133.75
1.5372	2.9001	2.4284	2.4284	133.75
0.6762	119.71	0.4126	0.4126	133.75
0.0575	1.3331	0.4885	1.1131	133.75
0.6963	1.2916	0.4223	1.0086	133.75
0.0006	1.0136	0.3494	0.0646	133.75
0.5013	58.72	0.3058	74.30	133.75
0.1635	0.2981	0.1027	24.8510	133.75

Middle Eastern Currencies				
USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAR
1.4104	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.64
0.2666	0.1890	5.2897	0.5377	5.12
2.65	1.8808	9.9488	0.9065	8.8
0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	1.0
0.2787	0.2346	12.2964	1.2280	11.1
0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0205	0.9
0.66	0.4685	2.4781	0.2481	2.4
0.2827	0.2076	1.0578	0.1164	1.0

Currency		USD	
SA Riyal	0.376	AE Dirham	0.37
KW Dinar	0.37	BH Dinar	0.37
CY Pound	0.37		

JORDAN MARKET

DAJAN

STUDIO HAJ

Professional 1 hour service

Develing

Daily

Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan) boosts operating profit but net profit edges down

ALTHOUGH THE Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan) succeeded in raising its operational earnings and operational profit by 10 and eight per cent respectively, the bank's net profit was slightly lower than the amount posted in 1996. According to the annual report, the operational earnings increased from JD5.08 million in 1996 to JD5.60 million at the end of last year. The operational profit was also higher going up from JD2.68 million to JD2.89 million.

The report showed that net profit amounted to JD1,950,193, JD160,000 lower than the net profit recorded in 1996. The bank attributed the slight drop to a JD312,000 in depreciation allocation for the new premises. The allocation, which was effected from the beginning of 1997, was taken in order to benefit from the last amendment to the income tax law which considers depreciation as an implicit profit for the bank.

The general assembly endorsed the bank's financial statements for 1997 and approved allocating JD1.03 million of the net profit for retained earnings.

Board Chairman Abdul Wahhab Tammar

told the shareholders that the deposits of clients went up from JD130 million at the end of 1996 to JD145 million at the end of last year. The rise represented a 11.5 per cent increase compared to an average growth of 6.7 per cent for the whole of the banking system. The deposits of other banks also went up from JD11 million to JD19 million.

Net direct credit facilities, after taking the necessary provisions and suspended interest, amounted to JD97.1 million (JD89.3 million at the end of 1996). The increase represents an 8.7 per cent growth compared to a 1.5 per cent growth for the whole banking sector. Furthermore, the bank boasted a 25.5 capital adequacy ratio in 1997 compared to 23 per cent in 1996.

Finally, the bank showed high cash liquidity as 67.96 per cent of clients' deposits or 59.42 per cent of the gross deposits were in cash or readily available cash. In 1996, the cash liquidity was 56 per cent of clients' deposits or 51.6 per cent of the gross deposits (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour + Al Aswaq).

Quality management system for standards institution

THE JORDAN Institution for Standards and Metrology (JISM) will be assisted by the Philadelphia Consulting Group (PCG) to establish, by the end of 1998, a Quality Management System (QMS) for JISM according to ISO 9002. This QMS shall consist of the quality manual, procedures, work instructions and quality records including forms and checklists. PCG shall assist in implementing the QMS, and carry out the necessary training for JISM personnel.

The establishment of this QMS is supported and financed by the German

Agency for Technical Cooperation GTZ/MSTQ Project. JISM is one of the few Jordanian public institutions which are striving to set-up a QMS to increase the confidence in the services offered by JISM in metrology, standards, testing and quality management (MSTQ) to the Jordanian private industry.

The MSTQ services are of basic importance for trade, health, safety and environment. Therefore they form an essential element in the Jordan-European partnership and in the WTO agreement on technical barriers to trade (TBT).

Swiss grant to help Jordan cover cost of developing hotel training programmes

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Swiss government has decided to grant Jordan 1.2 million Swiss francs to help cover the cost of developing hotel training programmes undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism.

This was announced Saturday by Tourism and Antiquities Minister Akel Biltaji during meetings with Annick Tonti, representative of the Swiss Agency for Regional Cooperation and G. Frick, advisor to the Swiss government on technical

programmes.

Mr. Biltaji said that the training, in which the private and public sectors are involved, aims at promoting Jordan's tourism industry.

He indicated that the government has adopted a plan offering incentives for this vital sector noting that the advanced training programmes are bound to help Jordan offer visitors high quality services.

At the meeting, Mr. Frick outlined the Swiss-backed programmes for training

Jordanians in hotel management noting that Swiss experts, who conducted a study of the tourism situation in Jordan, predict that the Kingdom is in need of thousands of trained personnel to cater to the needs of the country's hotels.

He said that the programme aims at providing training to the instructors as well as the trainees from the Ministry of Education's vocational schools and the centres run by the Vocational Training

Corporation.

He added that the programme will begin in September and will last for three years.

According to ministry sources, Jordan is in need of 8,000 trained professionals to serve an estimated 5,000 new hotel rooms.

Training is being done at the Amman College for Hospitality and Tourism Education and its adjoining Amman Hotel.

SIGNING AGREEMENT: Ramon Musters (R), the European Union (EU) economic adviser in Amman, and Mustafa Hudeib, the president of the Arab Academy for Banking Sciences, Sunday sign an agreement under which the EU will offer financial assistance to the academy to improve its academic, technical and scientific performance.



AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN

TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 10/05/1998

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE
355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.08	50	1400	257215	182.75	186.00 3.25+
2.340	1.620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.4	4.24	12	5000	8282	1.66	1.65 .01-
1.540	1.280	BANK OF JORDAN	4.2	0.00	10	3216	4254	1.33	1.32 .01-
1.200	.880	MID. EAST INV. BK.	61.1	0.00	9	11250	10411	.89	.91 .04+
2.680	1.600	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.2	8.81	4	11775	18840	1.60	1.60 -
6.160	4.660	THE HOUSING BK.	18.3	3.47	51	14747	85045	5.75	5.76 .01+
4.180	1.780	JOR. EDU. BANK	9	2	2	99	3960	1.90	1.90 .02-
.920	.590	JOR. CULP. BANK	3.9	10.61	5	6000	3960	1.60	1.60 .01+
4.020	1.740	JOR. INVT. BANK	19.1	0.00	24	5189	9739	1.89	1.87 .02-
3.900	1.500	JOR. DEV. BANK	16.1	3.85	29	4419	6887	1.26	1.26 .02-
4.460	2.500	ARAB BANKING CO.	19.6	0.00	2	24134	60385	2.57	2.50 .07-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 255.21	%CHG: +1.26	186	87249	465273		
2.240	1.620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.8	5.45	5	1270	2567	2.03	2.02 .01-
1.550	.970	NATL. PORTFOLIO	43.1	0.00	14	6050	6493	1.07	1.08 .01+
9.500	6.700	ALRAI	8.6	7.14	2	200	2499	8.60	8.40 .20-
4.600	2.890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.0	1.98	4	700	2835	4.05	4.04 .01-
1.090	.900	ZAKA EDUCATION	16.2	0.00	2	400	368	.92	.92 -
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 114.60	%CHG: -0.34	27	8720	14759		
1.160	.960	ATTANAKER	9	0.00	2	3950	2905	1.10	1.10 -
4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	15.0	4.35	27	10370	26296	2.55	2.53 .02-
7.080	5.500	ARAB POTASH CO.	27.1	2.64	1	200	1300	10.50	8.50 .20+
11.250	9.270	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.0	8.67	18	1880	19738	10.20	10.20 .05+
2.470	1.040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	10.9	7.30	1	150	206	1.44	1.37 .07-
7.380	5.800	JOR. WOOLLEN MILLS	8.1	2.25	1	650	2998	6.35	6.15 .20-
5.740	3.100	ARAB FIBRE IND.	14.2	3.85	29	15944	83261	3.26	3.20 .06-
1.440	1.020	JOR. FIBRE MANFCT.	9.8	8.47	1	700	708	1.19	1.19 .01-
1.420	.750	RAFA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	2	209	263	.82	.82 .03+
6.450	4.170	DR. ADUNA DV. INV.	6.7	6.29	4	4000	1668	5.50	5.56 .06+
.570	.400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	16.2	0.00	7	4500	2208	.47	.48 .01+
1.110	.670	ARAB PAPER CONV. IND.	21.1	0.00	1	2000	1380	.69	.69 -
.620	.420	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	10	8517	4434	.52	.52 .01-
.760	.270	INTERFERED PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	4	4000	1640	.40	.41 .01+
2.000	.920	NATL. CABLE WIRE MFG.	27.9	0.00	2	750	870	1.17	1.16 .01-
1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.3	4.62	9	3900	5070	1.20	1.30 -
1.540	.810	UNIV. NEW INDUS.	13.9	6.90	2	100	174	.07	.07 -
1.200	.670	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	9.0	14.92	4	2250	1511	.67	.67 -
1.620	1.320	NATL. CHEMIS.	9.3	7.58	3	1850	2442	1.32	1.22 .10-
1.080	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	12.1	11.62	7	4550	2917	.88	.86 .02-
1.660	1.290	EL. & RAY READY WEAR	47.9	0.00	5	1120	1514	1.34	1.34 .01-
1.210	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	7.4	5.51	12	10750	12650	1.27	1.27 -
1.230	.870	UNION CH. & YEG.	11.0	0.00	2	7500	8250	1.10	1.10 -
.860	.560	JORDAN STEEL	8.2	9.46	4	4059	2965	.73	.74 .01+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 103.63	%CHG: -0.17	169	90133	190888		
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 172.62	%CHG: +0.72	382	186102	670920		
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 10/05/1998									
1.050	.910	EXPORT & FIN. BKK. 75%	16.8	0.00	5	26250	18575	.91	.91 -
.240	.240	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	2	1650	651	.42	.42 -
.800	.660	UNION INV. 50%	9	0.00	11	52946	13764	.75	.76 .01+
.620	.260	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	9	32450	12305	.41	.41 -
2.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9	0.00	1	2000	2800	1.45	1.40 .05-
1.660	.170	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	9	7100	2287	.49	.48 .01-
.470	.240	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	39.2	0.00	4	4250	1445	.25	.25 .01-
.510	.280	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	1	1600	320	.22	.22 .01-
.650	.360	NATL. MILK. IND. BAKING	9	0.00	74	311050	140316	.46	.44 .02-
.520	.400	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	1	250	105	.41	.42 .01+
.690	.580	MIDWEST PHARM. 50%	9	0.00	1	250	60	.60	.60 -
.730	.550	RAST PHARM.	9	0.00	5	6100	4148	.68	.68 -
.480	.240	INDUS. ENG.	9	0.00	2	5000	1350	.27	.27 .01-
.830	.470	INDUS. CERAMIC	13.1	0.00	2	1000	602	.51	.50 .01-
.950	.580	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	3	74	46	.63	.63 -
.710	.430	NATL. POLYMER	9	0.00	7	6500	3380	.53	.52 .01-
.950	.470	OPTICAL HEARING 75%	9	0.00	7	11150	4094	.60	.60 .02+
1.000	.750	KIBAL PRINT CO. 75%	12.5	0.24	1	1000	570	.82	.82 -
GRAND TOTAL					144	470383	209118		

S: Stock dividend during the past 12 months
N: Listed during the past 12 months
P: P/E ratio is 100 or more
E: Earnings in zero or N/A for the most recent year

European bank lends Arab Potash Company JD32.7m

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending 43 million European Currency Units (ECUs) (about JD32.7 million) for upgrading and expanding potash manufacturing activities at Saft, in the southeastern part of the Dead Sea, a statement by the European Commission delegation said Sunday.

The loan, which is part of the EIB's continuing efforts in support of the industrial sector in the Middle East, is made available to the Arab Potash Company (APC), the world's fifth largest potash producer, said the statement.

Owned 55 per cent by the government, APC's one of Jordan's most successful manufacturing companies.

The statement said the project comprises the expansion of existing solar evaporation surface areas of carnallite and salt ponds, as well as the installation of a new brine pumping station.

It added that the project will increase the potash production capacity by 10 per cent from 1.8 to 2.0 million tonnes per year.

The project creates value-added from the vast mineral resources of the Dead Sea, but without a negative impact on its water balance. Potash, widely used as fertiliser, as well as in a range of other chemical appliances such as water treatment, desulphurisation and printing, is one of Jordan's major exports and foreign exchange contributors.

According to the statement, the expansion of the industrial port of Aqaba, also supported by the EIB with a 30 million (ECUs) (JD22.8 million) loan, will facilitate export shipments by Jordan's large industrial projects.

The EIB, the European Union's long term financing institutions, was set up in 1958 to provide loan finance for capital investment furthering EU objectives. It participates in the implementation of EU cooperation policies towards third countries that have cooperation or association agreements with the Union.

In 1997, some one billion ECUs (about \$1.1 billion) was committed by the bank in support of a broad range of investments in the Mediterranean region.

According to the statement, this loan follows a number of other loans committed by the EIB, making total financing since 1978 in Jordan exceed ECU 400 million (about JD304 million) to support projects in water supply and wastewater treatment, telecommunications, transport, electricity transmission and distribution, agricultural development and SME industry projects.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Prices as at 8/05/98 19:15

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7708	0.6108	1.4788	132.75	1.4362	1746.38	1.9948	5.9360
DE Mark	0.5647	-	0.3446	0.8348	75.00	0.8106	985.99	1.1266	3.3625
GB Sterling	1.6372	2.9001	-	2.2424	217.52	2.3613	2859.52	3.2663	9.7196
CH Franc	0.6762	1.1971	0.4125	-	89.79	0.5705	1180.62	134.86	4.0180
JP Yen	0.0076	1.3331	0.4585	1.1131	-	1.0811	13.15	150.23	4.4705
CA Dollar	0.6963	1.2916	0.4225	1.0666	1.08	-	1270.80	1.4651	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0136	0.3494	0.8846	1317.18	0.8220	-	11.42	3.3992
NL Guilder	0.5013	88.72	0.3058	74.10	66.48	0.7194	874.53	-	2.9781
FR Franc	0.1685	0.2981	0.1027	24.8910	22.33	0.2417	33.58	33.6900	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.8405	0.3050	3.6727	1513.40	3.4160
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2597	0.5317	5.1347	0.4302	5.1801	2134.66	4.5161
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0813	0.98	403.53	0.9108
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8808	9.9488	-	9.86	0.8091	9.74	4014.64	9.0617
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	-	0.0838	1.01	415.71	0.5383
Kuwait Dinar	3.2787	2.3246	12.2964	1.2360	11.94	-	12.04	4961.97	0.8383
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0208	0.9312	0.0830	-	412.07	0.5301
Lebanese L1000	0.68	0.4686	2.4781	0.2491	2.4065	0.2016	2.4268	-	2.2872
Egyptian	0.2327	0.3076	1.0979	0.1104	1.0657	0.0893	1.0751	443.03	-

Energy

Oil

RACJ begins countdown for 16th Jordan Rally

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Four days remain for the start of the 16th Jordan International Rally — the country's most prestigious auto sports event which forms the second round of the Middle East Rally Championship.

As foreign competitors arrive in Amman and local counterparts put their finishing touches on arduous preparations, organisers — the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) — Sunday announced that at least 32 competitors of an entry list of 38 were expected to start the two-day rally.

At 11 a.m. on Thursday, His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein will give the start signal for the 23-stage rally which includes 300.580 kilometres of special stages.

Seveo time champion Mohammed Bin Sulayyem of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will be driving a Ford Escort seeking to further boost his Jordan Rally record after he won last year followed by Abdullah Bakhshab of Saudi Arabia and Oman's Hamed Al Wahabi a distant third.

With Bakhshab and Wahabi missing the rally this year to compete in Europe, Cypriot Andreas Tsouloufas and a host of Jordanian competitors will be challenging nine-time Middle East champion Bin Sulayyem who leads the 1998 Championship after winning the inaugural Oman rally.

The regional championship includes rallies in Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar and Dubai.

This year's top Jordanian competitors will be Bashar Bustami, Mohammad and Ahmad Daoud. The trio have won the Jordan Drives Open championship.

Ahmad's co-driver will be Malek Hariri, in a Ford Cosworth, while Bustami will be partnering Rafi Bilemjan in a Mitsubishi Lancer.

Mohammad will be driving a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution. He was Jordan's top competitor last year, finishing 4th overall.

Previous Jordanian champion Amjad

JORDAN RALLY RECORD

1981: Michel Saleh/Lebanon
1982: Michel Saleh/Lebanon
1983: Saeed Al Hajiri/Qatar
1984: Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE
1985: Saeed Al Hajiri/Qatar
1986: Saeed Al Hajiri/Qatar
1987: Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE
1988: Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE
1989: Abbas Mosawi/Qatar
1990: Abbas Mosawi/Qatar
1991: Sbeikh Hamad Al Thani/Qatar
1992: Sbeikh Hamad Al Thani/Qatar
1993: Abdullah Bakhshab/S. Arabia
1994: Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE
1995: Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE
1996: Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE
1997: Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE

Toyota Celica GT
Toyota Celica GT
Opel Manta 400
Toyota Celica Turbo
Porsche 911 SCRS
Porsche 911 SCRS
Toyota Celica TwinCam Turbo
Toyota Celica TwinCam Turbo
Toyota Celica GT4
Toyota Celica GT4
Mitsubishi Gallant VR4
Ford Escort RS Cosworth
Ford Escort Cosworth
Ford Escort Cosworth

Farrah is also in the rally with partner Faisal Sa'doun.

The only woman in the rally will be Fiooa Mulcaby in a Peugeot 205 GTI.

Addressing reporters at a press conference, Organising Committee Chairman Hasan Ala'adin told reporters that this year's Jordan Rally will be the longest of the regional rallies with 13 special asphalt stages on the first day.

While noting that the rally lacked a major sponsor for the fourth year in its 15-year history, he expressed optimism that this issue will be resolved next year.

He said that RACJ froze its application to the International Automobile Federation FIA to include Jordan Rally as part of the World Championship because of the same reason.

Asked about the lack of sponsorship for Jordanians, and the absence of ladies, Ala'adin was outspoken in his remarks, blaming the lack of sponsorship as the major obstacle.

"With the vast difference in preparation and funding, no one is surprised at the expected results every year," Ala'adin said.

No Jordanian has won the rally since it started in 1981. The best Jordanian showing was third place finishes by Ziyad Bustami in 1981, HRH Prince Abdullah in 1986 and 1988; Hani Bisharat in 1987, Amjad Farrah in 1993, and Ma'rouf Abu Samra in

1995.

Winding asphalt stages will test the drivers on the first day with special stages starting in Rumman Forest, Slehi, Iraq Al Amir, the Dead Sea, Mushaqqar, Mousa Springs, Mount Nebo, Mahes, Iraq Al Amir, Mushaqqar, Mousa Springs, Mount Nebo and ending in Dar el Dawa.

Desert tracks on the second day will be the ultimate test of experience, stamina and well-maintained and sponsored cars.

Starting at 7:30 a.m. two special stages will take drivers to the south of the country through Tunaib, Daba'a, Salayta, Mudeseiat, Daba'a, Swaga, Daba'a, Salayta, Mudeseiat and Tunaib.

The rally will end at around 6: p.m. Friday.

Competitors represent the UAE, Ireland, Cyprus, Qatar, Kuwait, Australia, Oman, Great Britain, and Germany.

The FIA stewards of the event are Wilhelm Lyding from Germany and Derek Ledger from Jordan.

Last year, twenty-five cars started the rally which included 19 stages, including 11 asphalt stages on the first day. Fifteen drivers, including five Jordanians finished the rally.

Jones sets eyes on 100m in China

OSAKA, Japan (AFP) — World sprint queen Marion Jones, fresh from setting the fastest 100 metres time of the year, has her sights set on going faster and lowering her personal best in China next week.

"When you have a race like that, you just definitely want to win. And if I win, I will definitely run faster than 10.76, which is my personal best. Jones said after surveying the high-class field that awaits her.

"If I can run 10.60 something — that's what I'm

gearing for."

World championship silver medalist Zhanna Pintushevich of Ukraine, bronze medalist Sevatheda Fynes of the Bahamas, and Olympic 200m silver medalist Susanthika Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka have signed to compete against Jones in Cheongdu, capital of the southwestern province of Sichuan.

Chinese entrants in the race include Li Xuemei, who clocked the second-fastest 100m of 1997 with a 10.79 in last year's Chinese National Games.

"I'm really looking forward to going there and competing against the young woman who ran 10.79 at the end of the season last year," Jones said, although disputing the Chinese billing of the race as the "world's fastest women."

"I don't like to refer to it as the world best, because it's hard to say that when you don't have Gail Devers, Merlene Ottey and some of the other fast runners in the world, but I'm looking forward to it."

At stake in the race is a one million yuan (\$120,482) bonus for anyone breaking Florence Griffith-Joyner's 10-year-old world record of 10.49 seconds.

Jones has already said she is after the world 100m, 200m and 400m records "before my career is over."

A week ago in Shizuoka, central Japan, Jones coasted to an easy victory in the 200m, and then on Tuesday she bettered her personal best in the 100m jump, improving by 12 centimetres to 7.05m in Mito, north of Tokyo.

The American was clocked at 10.79 to win the 100m at the IAAF Japanese Grand Prix in Osaka Saturday, only three hundredths of a second outside her best.

Jones said her mark in the long jump was the best of the three events she contested in Japan.

"My goal in coming into this year was to jump over seven metres, at least by the end of the season. I've jumped 7.05 already," she said the 22-year-old former basketball star.

Jones helped North Carolina win the NCAA title for three years before she turned her mind back to track after breaking her leg twice in 1996 — an injury that needed a permanent screw in her left leg.

Jordan's Mufti among 12 finishers in Lebanese Rally

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's Maya Mufti returned home with more than a trophy. She brought with her the experience she was looking for in the world of rallying.

Mufti and Lebanese co-driver Hala Nasser Al Din in a Nissan Pulsar took part in Rallie du Printemps in Lebanon last weekend driving through the Lebanese mountains.

Mufti came in the 12th place clocking 1:28.43 in the 2-day event.

"It was an exciting experience for me to be part of a rally outside Jordan," she told the Jordan Times.

The rally consisted of five special stages covering a total distance of 339.60 km.

"The track was hilly and the tarmac needed some time to get used to," she said.

"We had two groups: A 2-wheel drive and

a four-wheel drive," she said.

Mufti and her co-driver were the only women driver team taking part in the event in which 22 cars participated with only 12 reaching the finish line.

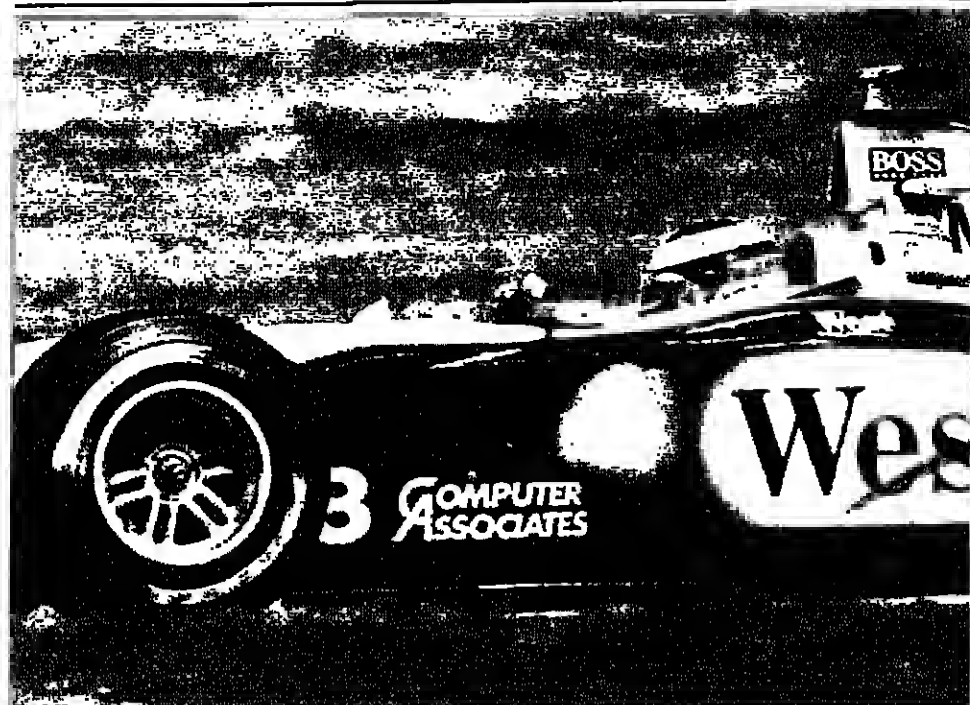
"Some cars faced mechanical problems and some had accidents. I was lucky enough not to face serious problems," she added.

Although Mufti did not take part in any of the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan's rallies, she had her taste of speed in the many speed tests here in the kingdom.

"I took part in the speed tests here but never in a national rally. After this experience and if I get any support maybe I will," she pointed out.

Mufti will be taking part in the Rallie du Liban which will take place July 16-19.

"I am looking forward to enhance what I have learnt in the next event."



Mika Hakkinen takes a curve as he leads the Spanish Formula One Grand Prix at the Montmelo racetrack. Hakkinen leads the overall standings of the championship with 26 points ahead of teammate David Coulthard (Reuters photo)

Hakkinen dominates in Spain

BARCELONA (AFP) — World championship leader Mika Hakkinen dominated from the start to win Sunday's Spanish Grand Prix in his McLaren-Mercedes.

Hakkinen scored his third victory of the year, finishing ahead of his Scottish teammate David Coulthard as McLaren again finished 1-2.

Two-time world champion Michael Schumacher of Germany was third in his Ferrari.

Hakkinen, who won the opening two races of the season in Australia and Brazil, increased his lead after five championship races to seven points over Coulthard.

The Finn now has 36 points to the Scot's 29 and Schumacher's 24. He clocked 1hr 33min 37.62sec to complete the 65 laps of the 4.728km circuit, a total of 307.320km. He averaged 196.863kph.

Alexander Wurz of Austria was fourth in his Benetton, followed by Brazilian Rubens Barrichello in a Stewart-Ford, gaining their first points of the season, and defending world champion Jacques Villeneuve of Canada in a Williams.

Villeneuve won this race last year, but his Williams is considerably less potent this year.

McLaren-Mercedes now have 65 points in the constructors' championship, 30 clear of second-placed Ferrari.

Hakkinen led for the entire race except for two trips to the pits in a race almost totally devoid of incidents and interest as the McLaren team continued their complete mastery over their rivals this year.

Hakkinen, on pole for the third time this season, took command from the grid and had a lead of 1.8secs over Coulthard after only one lap with Irishman Eddie Irvine up to third having started sixth.

Hakkinen's first stop took 7.8secs and he emerged back onto the road behind Coulthard and Schumacher. He was soon able to regain the lead, however, after his main rivals also went in for fuel and fresh tyres.

Giancarlo Fisichella's Benetton and Irvine's Ferrari collided on the 28th lap, when running fourth and fifth. Both ended up in the gravel and the pair exchanged angry words as they made their way on foot to the pits — a rare moment of drama as the race turned into a procession.

Schumacher was punished for breaking the 75mph speed limit in the pit-lane and had to return to his garage on lap 41 for a 10-second stop-go penalty, which cost him third place to Wurz — although he was later able to

force his way back.

Hakkinen's second stop did not go as smoothly as his first because, "Damon Hill" was entering the pits as the Finn was about to leave, and the leader lost a couple of seconds making sure he avoided a collision with the former world champion — whose miserable season continued as he was forced to retire later in the race.

Coulthard was next to stop and, by contrast, was stationary for only seven seconds but his chances of winning rested on Hakkinen making a mistake — a rarity this season.

The Scot finished almost 10 seconds in arrears of Hakkinen in a race in which only three cars were on the same lap as the winner at the finish.

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& TAMARA KRISHNA
Chief: Yehuda Meir, M.D., Inc.

SAFETY FIRST

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ 7 2 ♥ Q 9 8 4 ♦ A 8 5 2 ♣ A K 7</p> <p>WEST</p> <p>♠ 10 9 4 ♥ 7 5 ♦ Q 10 7 4 ♣ 10 8 5</p>	<p>EAST</p> <p>♠ K 6 5 3 ♥ 10 9 8 2 ♦ 9 ♣ J 8 6 4</p> <p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A Q 6 ♥ A K 7 3 ♦ K J 6 ♣ Q 3 2</p>
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The bidding:

<p>SOUTH</p> <p>1♠ Pass 1NT Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass</p>	<p>WEST</p> <p>1♠ Pass 1NT Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass</p>	<p>NORTH</p> <p>1♠ Pass 1NT Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass</p>	<p>EAST</p> <p>1♠ Pass 1NT Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass</p>
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Opening lead: Jack of ♠

Suppose someone just showed you the diamond suit from the North-South holding and asked you how to play it. What would be your reply? Go to the head of the class if you answered: "How many tricks do I need from the suit?"

The auction was straightforward, South's jump to two no trump

showed 19-20 points, and North's raise jump to four no trump was invitational, not ace-asking. South elected to bid on because of prime values and the diamond fit.

West leads the jack of spades. How would you play the hand?

The lead has given you eight fast tricks, so you need only four from the diamond suit to get home. Had you needed five tricks from the suit, your best shot would have been to finesse East for the queen, but what now?

Declarer made no mistake. After capturing East's king of spades with the ace, declarer led the king of diamonds from hand and, when the queen did not appear, crossed to the board with the king of clubs and led a diamond toward the jack.

Had East started with four diamonds, the defender would either have to rise with the queen or else the closed hand's jack would win regardless. East could score only one trick in the suit. When East showed out, declarer inserted the jack, but now West was presented with similar losing options. Ducking the trick was futile but, after West took the queen, declarer was left with a marked finesse for the ten. Six no trump bid and made.

Lens celebrate French league win

PARIS (AFP) — It was appropriate that Lens players celebrated by spraying cans of lager, and not Champagne, around the dressing room after they sealed the French league title on Saturday night.

Lens, who drew 1-1 at Auxerre to become French champions for the first time, are a blue-collar team from a blue-collar region.

Lens, an industrial town in the north of France, has a population of just 35,000. The whole area gets behind the team, however, with home crowds often well in excess of the number of residents.

The title win was achieved without the resources available to rich rivals like Marseille and Paris St Germain and owed much to old-fashioned hard work, allied to the inspiration provided by two Eastern European imports: Czech international Vladimir Smicer and Yugoslav striker Antoo Drobnyak.

Half of the winning squad came through the club's youth scheme.

Things had looked bleak for Lens, who arrived at Auxerre on the back of seven straight league wins, when Sabri Lamouchi crashed home a low right-foot drive from 20 yards in the 14th minute to give the hosts the lead.

But Lens, who had looked decidedly nervous as the consequences of failure dawned on them, equalised in the 53rd minute through Yohan Lachor, who steered a left-foot shot home from the edge of the six yard box after racing free on the left.

As Lens finished the stronger, Tooy Vairelles had a late

effort backed off the line and Cameroon midfielder Marc-Vivieoe Foe had a header brilliantly turned over by Auxerre keeper Fabien Cool.

Lens, whose last success at national level came when they were winners of the wartime league in 1944, won the title on a superior goal difference to Metz, who beat Lyon 1-0 in their final game.

More than 20,000 fans gathered in the Felix Bollaert Stadium to Lens to cheer the new champions when they arrived home at 3am on Sunday. Earlier, 4,000 fans had been present at the local airport.

Lens' coach Daniel Leclercq said: "This title is the reward for attacking football." His side ended the season equal top scorers with Auxerre with 55 goals in 34 games.

Club president Gervais Martel said: "This is the culmination of 10 years hard work. It's crazy, just wonderful."

Martel said the club's passionate fans, many decked head-to-toe in the team's red and gold colours, had played a key role in the team's success.

"All the players, management and directors have to say a big thank you to the fans," he said.

Goalscorer Lachor, who missed last week's Cup final defeat to PSG, said: "I'm just overjoyed. What an occasion."

Now the side known throughout France as the "Blood and the Gold" because of their garish uniforms can contemplate their first-ever appearance in the European Champions League.

All Spanish final in German Open

HAMBURG, Germany (AFP) — It might be the German Open, but it will be an all-Spanish final between Alex Corretja and Albert Costa after they scored contrasting semi-final victories on Saturday.

Costa was on court for just 14 minutes before sixth seeded Karol Kucera of Slovakia retired with a blister on his left foot, with Costa leading 3-0, 40-0. In contrast, fourth seeded Corretja struggled for two hours 11 minutes to overcome fellow Spaniard Felix Mantilla 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

"I had a little bit of luck," said 10th-seeded Costa. "I noticed he wasn't running

so good for the forehand and thought there might be something wrong. It's not good for the tournament but it's good for me, and I'm fresh and ready to play five sets tomorrow."

And although the Spanish are known for being a close-knit group on tour, he is not concerned about playing a compatriot.

"When you play them you have the same concentration and same motivation. I know they are my friends, but on the court you are not friends," said Costa.

Kucera admitted he had been receiving treatment for blisters throughout the week, but he aggravated the

problem in overcoming Thomas Muster on Friday.

"When I woke this morning it was very bad and when I tried to warm up I had to ask for the trainer," said a disappointed Kucera.

"I have to look seriously at doing something with my shoes, perhaps with a new insole, because this (blisters) happens a few times in the year."

Corretja and Mantilla, who also met in the Dubai final this year, mostly rallied from the baseline, but some of the exchanges were dramatic and entertaining.

In the second part of the match, Corretja often turned to serve and volley to keep

the points short as he was tiring.

"I don't know how I won today," Corretja confessed. "I have never felt so tired on a tennis court before. At 6-2, 1-0, I was feeling so bad and couldn't move anymore. In the third set I was just trying to focus on my serve."

With Costa enjoying a much easier week, the odds are very much against Corretja in the best of five sets final. But Corretja is ready to try his best.

"I've seen the doctor and hope I can play the final in good condition," he said.

"Once you're in the final you want to win."

<p>PHILADELPHIA '1'</p> <p>Bruce Willis & Gary Oldman ... in</p>	<p>PHILADELPHIA '2'</p>	<p>PLAZA</p> <p>The biggest cinema production</p>	<p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD '1'</p> <p>Meg Ryan ... in</p>	<p>GALLERIA 2</p> <p>ABDOUN</p>	<p>GALLERIA 1</p> <p>ABDOUN</p>	<p>Hikam Yousif Theatre</p> <p>TEL: 4625155</p> <p>STARTING APRIL 6TH</p>
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Swing and Rot

NEW YORK (AFP) — New York's ... and San Antonio's ... produced impressive ... in ...

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Ewing and Robinson spark crucial NBA wins

NEW YORK (AFP) — New York's Patrick Ewing and San Antonio's David Robinson produced impressive performances in crucial games Saturday to revive their clubs in the National Basketball Association playoffs.

The dominating centers, each of whom starred for an Olympic gold medal "Dream Team", sparked lopsided home triumphs to pull the Knicks and Spurs within two games to one in their best-of-seven quarter-finals.

Ewing, in only his second game back after right wrist surgery, scored 19 points and pulled down seven rebounds to lead the Knicks past Indiana 83-76. It was Ewing's first game here since December 16.

"I think it's almost to a point of mind-boggling that a guy could be out so long and have such an impact on such an important game," Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy said. "It goes right to the heart of how hard he not only rehabilitated the wrist, but how he kept himself in condition."

Robinson, a 1996 Olympic hero, scored 29 points and pulled down nine rebounds as the Spurs blasted regular-season champion Utah 86-64, in a Western Conference matchup.

The Jazz matched the NBA modern-era playoff facility record, becoming the fourth club to score only 64 points in a post-season game. Utah shot only 29 per cent from the field.

"Our defence started from the beginning of the game," Robinson said.

"The defence was excellent. We started our rotation early and only gave them one shot (per possession)."

The fourth game in every series was set for Sunday, with Chicago ahead of Charlotte 2-1 in the other Eastern Conference matchup and the Los Angeles Lakers up 2-1 on Seattle in the other Western Conference series.

The Knicks can equalize after Ewing and the New York bench silenced the Pacers, who managed only a club playoff-low 10 fourth-quarter points.

"It felt good to come out and give such a great effort," Ewing said. "It feels good to come out and give such a great effort."

Ewing made a lackluster return in game two after missing 4 1/2 months with an injured right wrist, scoring only 10 points. But he helped ignite a 15-4 run to open the fourth quarter and put the Knicks ahead to stay.

"The first game back I was very rusty," Ewing said. "I tried to step it up a little bit and my teammates got me the ball. As we go along, my game gets more and more refined and my wind gets better."

Ewing made 7 of 16 shots from the field and got Indiana center Rik Smits into foul trouble. The Dutchman fouled out with 5:44 remaining, scoring only nine points.

"I'm still a little disappointed in how I shot the ball," Ewing said. "They felt in rhythm but they just didn't drop. There was some rustiness. At one point in the first quarter I felt a little bit tired and then again in the third. But at the end of the game, I felt great."

Indiana coach Larry Bird drew laughs with mock sympathy for his 1992 U.S. Olympic gold medal teammate, saying, "The way you talk about Patrick, it brings tears to my eyes."

New York reserves, outplayed in the first two games, responded.

John Starks made 12 points. Chris Childs added 10 points, five assists and four rebounds while Chris Mills contributed 11 points and seven rebounds.

"Our bench didn't play at all," Bird said. "Our starters got some big leads in the first quarter. Our bench came in like they were on vacation and didn't get back in the game."

Indiana's Reggie Miller scored 23 points but Childs shut Miller down in the fourth quarter.

"I put extra pressure on myself to improve," Childs said.

"Reggie is a great player. I just try to stay on him as much as possible and put pressure on him."

The Pacer guard had two points on two shots in the last quarter.

The Knicks outrebounded Indiana 42-27 and made 22 of their first 23 free throws. The Pacers made only 19 of 32 free throws for the game.

At San Antonio, stars for both clubs left before the end with injuries but trainers for each club said their men will be ready to play Sunday.

Utah's Karl Malone twisted his right ankle and missed the fourth quarter. Spurs forward Tim Duncan left early after playing on a sore ankle but will also be ready on Sunday.

Faisali's Udwan blames football association over impasse as competition remains suspended

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — President of the Al Faisali Club Sunday said that the door was still open to resolve the deadlock between the Jordan Football Association (JFA) and a coalition of seven clubs to avoid the suspension of the Premier League (PL) Championship for two years.

Speaking at a press conference late Sunday, Sultan Udwan blamed the JFA for failing to hold a meeting with the seven clubs to discuss its demands.

The logjam between the JFA and the seven clubs erupted following the latter's demand to amend the formula that governs the distributions of PL ticket sales revenue.

The clubs decided to suspend their participation demanding that revenue be distributed equally among the 10 PL clubs, irrespective of the number of fans attending each club's matches.

The demand by Al Faisali, Al Ramtha, Al Ahli, Kufroum, Al Arabi, Al Hussein and Al Qadisiyyah clubs requested an amendment of the 1997 formula that governs the allocation of the JFA's competitions revenue.

The clubs boycotted the PL after the JFA last month signed an agreement to market and sell matches in return for a JD300,000.

Two clubs, Al Wihdat and Shabab Al Hussein, declined to support this demand and hinted that any change of

the present formula would prompt a "reconsideration" of their stand of competing in the PL Championship.

Al Jazireh Club was the only party that refrained from supporting any of the two sides.

The JFA last week formed a special committee and officials said that it was difficult to meet the coalition's demand adding that any change of the present ticket sales revenue should be unanimous.

The JFA committee presented a set of recommendations to the seven clubs, which would ensure more income to the smaller clubs.

The JFA said that it was ready to give the seven clubs some concessions, including 50 per cent of the revenue levied from the TV coverage of PL contests.

The recommendations also noted that the revenues levied from the matches played in the Golden Quarter — the contest among the big four — be allocated among these clubs only.

However, Udwan told reporters that the seven clubs had not yet received anything from the JFA.

He was referring to the recommendations which were allegedly presented by the JFA to the seven clubs on Tuesday where they agreed to distribute 80 per cent of ticket sales among the 10 clubs.

"If we receive any offer from the JFA, the seven clubs would meet and decide whether to accept or to reject it."

Al Faisali cannot decide by itself, because we are not alone in the impasse," he added.

The veteran soccer player-turned board chairman blamed the government for failing to financially assist clubs in the Kingdom.

He said that the number of clubs in the country are estimated at 300, with an average annual government financial aid of JD1,000 annually.

Udwan noted that smaller clubs cannot raise money and depend largely on the revenues they received from the PL contests.

"Larger clubs should make concessions to ensure that smaller ones can live. The only way is through an equal distribution of the PL ticket sales," he added.

JFA officials could not be reached for comment but executive board member, Bassam Haroun, earlier told the Jordan Times: "There is no room for any change on the formula that governs the distribution of ticket sales among the 10 clubs. We are not ready to make any changes."

"We have made several concessions to them which were beyond their expectations and I believe that they will reconsider their stand soon," Haroun added.

He hinted the seven clubs would ease their stand to avoid the suspension of the PL competitions for two years — one of the options reportedly considered by JFA members.

Hingis, Williams set up teenaged Rome final

ROME (AFP) — Martina Hingis had it easy while Venus Williams needed time, but both won through Saturday in opposite styles to set up a revenge final at the \$926,250 Italian Open.

Hingis moved into her fourth match of the year against American Williams, who has accounted for two of the Swiss World No. 1 player's three losses during 1998.

Hingis booked her place at the Foro Italico with a 6-2, 6-1 defeat of Croatian Mirjana Lucic. The first meeting between the Australian Open doubles champions took a mere 46 minutes.

Williams, seeded ninth, had to work for almost two-and-a-half hours before eliminating Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario — at 26 the only player in the semi-final field old enough to order a drink legally in most countries — 6-3, 2-6, 7-5.

The all-teenage finale was no surprise to Hingis, who took over the world's top ranking a year ago at age 16 and has not let it go.

"People have been talking about we teenagers for a long time — and here we are," said the Swiss, who has lost just 15 games so far this week as she has blown her way into a fifth final this year.

Hingis was untroubled by Lucic, 16, who became the youngest player on the WTA Tour ever to defend a title when she won again in her home country last weekend.

"Martina is always too strong, she's No. 1. It was tough to play against her," said the Croatian. "I was too nervous. It was a lot for me to play a major semi-final."

"I wasn't able to concentrate in order to play my best."

The comeback improves Williams' record this year to 27 wins, three defeats. She and Hingis last met in the semi-finals at Key Biscayne



USA's Venus Williams hits a forehand in her semifinal match against Spain's Arantxa Sanchez at Italian Open Tennis in Rome. Williams won 6-3 2-6 7-5 (Reuters photo)

in March with the American winning.

The 17-year-old Williams won a break-strewn first set against Sanchez Vicario, seeded fifth.

The American was forced to take treatment twice at the start of the third set. She still broke for 6-5 and served out the victory.

Williams will be aiming for her third title of the year after winning her career first

in Oklahoma City and beating Anna Kournikova for the crown at the Lipton.

The American was playing in her fifth semi-final in six 1998 events and denied her Spanish opponent a third final at the Foro Italico.

"I'm not playing as well as I have this year," said Williams.

"No matter what the shape of my knee, I still must play

the final tomorrow.

"I can't play it on Monday. If it's too bad, I'll have to retire. I don't want to make it worse. There will be another title next year, but this one means a lot to me now."

"I had problems with the knee since doubles on Friday. It didn't get better overnight. I went into the match not knowing how it would be."

Syria beats Jordan 2-0 in U-19 Asian Cup qualifiers

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

THE KINGDOM'S Under-19 national soccer team Sunday lost 2-0 to its Syrian counterpart on the opening day of Group Two of the 31st Asian Cup qualifiers currently underway in Beirut.

Jordan's youth team held the Syrians to a goalless first half but conceded the two goals in the second half.

Saudi Arabia beat Lebanon 1-0 in the other match.

Jordan will next meet the Saudi team on Tuesday before facing hosts Lebanon May 14.

Only one of the four teams will qualify to the 10-team Asian finals in Bangkok, Thailand in October.

Thirty-nine nations are contesting the preliminary round qualifiers of the event divided into nine groups. The finals will include the top team in each group and the host nation.

Four teams — the top three finalists and the previous Asian champion — will then qualify to the Youth World Cup in Nigeria in 1999.

The Jordanian team is just out of a week-long training camp in Egypt, where they won one match and lost another two. They also had another camp in Baghdad where they lost one match

and drew in the other.

The Syrian team, who won the title in 1994, trained in Tartus, Syria and Kuwait before arriving in Beirut. Together with one-time hosts Saudi Arabia they are considered the favourites to clinch the qualifying berth from the group.

The nine groups are:

- Group 1: Iran, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen
- Group 2: Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria
- Group 3: UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine
- Group 4: Iraq, Uzbekistan, Nepal, Turkmenistan, Democratic Rep. of Korea
- Group 5: Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan
- Group 6: India, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Bhutan
- Group 7: China, Malaysia, Singapore, Laos, Guam
- Group 8: Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Brunei
- Group 9: Korea, Indonesia, Chinese Taipei, Philippines

SCOREBOARD

American League

Oakland	15	White Sox	7
Baltimore	7	Tampa Bay	0
Boston	3	Kansas City	0
Minnesota	8	NY Yankees	0
Texas	7	Cleveland	0
Toronto	4	Seattle	0
Detroit	7	Anaheim	0

National League

San Francisco	5	Chicago Cubs	1
Chicago Cubs	6	San Francisco	0
Florida	7	Los Angeles	0
Montreal	4	Colorado	0
Pittsburgh	6	Cincinnati	0
Atlanta	6	San Diego	0
Houston	11	Milwaukee	0
St Louis at NY Mets	Postponed		
Arizona at Philadelphia	Postponed		

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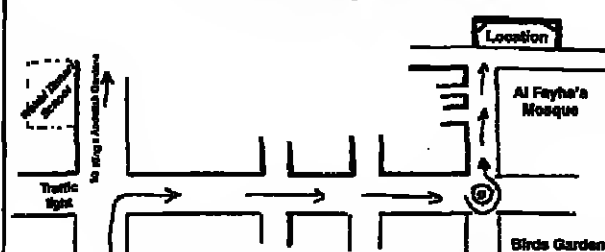
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كثيرا في الدنيا

King receives credentials of 5 envoys



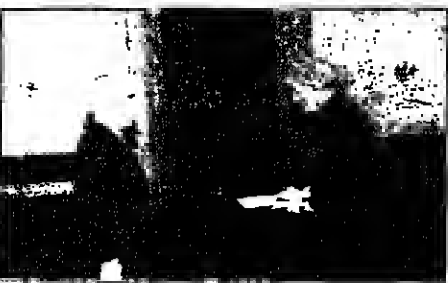
Tunisian ambassador to Amman, Hatem Ben Othman, presents his credentials to His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday. The ceremony was attended by Royal Court Chief Fayed Tarawneh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, Minister of Culture and Youth and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Talal Sa'ad Hassan (Petra photo)



Japanese ambassador to Amman, Kouichi Matsumoto, presents his credentials to His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday (Petra photo)



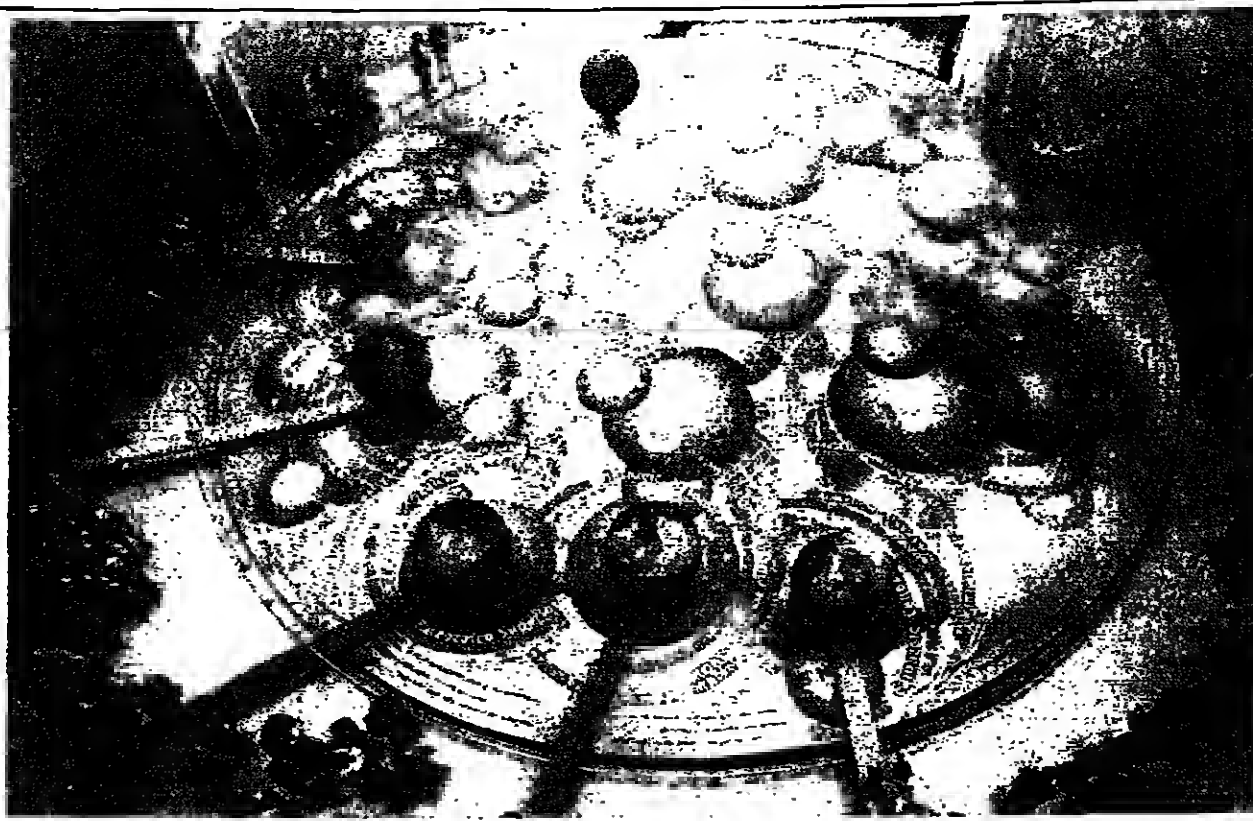
Ukrainian ambassador to Amman, Evgeny Miltenko, presents his credentials to His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday (Petra photo)



Indian ambassador to Amman, Her Charan Singh Dhody, presents his credentials to His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday (Petra photo)



Philippines ambassador to Amman, Roteato Mdzio, presents his credentials to His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday (Petra photo)



EVOLUTION OF OCEANS: Visitors examine one of the exhibitions depicting the history and evolution of the oceans at the Future Pavilion of the Lisbon World Fair Expo '98 during a rehearsal Saturday night. The Lisbon Expo '98 will open on May 21 and is dedicated to the Oceans and its preservation. 148 countries are participating (Reuters photo)

Aziz: U.S. impeding efforts to reach agreement with Kurds

Iraq renews call for 'civilised dialogue' with Washington

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz has said Baghdad was conducting talks with Kurdish rebels in its north but Washington was impeding efforts to reach an agreement.

"Early last week I was receiving a delegation in this building from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the group of [Massoud] Barzani," Mr. Aziz said in a meeting with former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

"We did not start the war. Actually the U.S. government did," he said. "The United States bombed Iraq 'and in spite of that, we said, well, we are open, to open a new page in the relationship between us,'" said Mr. Aziz, the text of whose remarks was released on Sunday.

"The first thing of what we could achieve is an objective, civilised dialogue," he said. Mr. Aziz said that the United States and Iraq, which had good relations before the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, would have to deal with each other again in the future.

"This administration and coming administrations in the near future, we will have to deal with each other. We have to sit and discuss and work and do whatever we can together," he told Mr. Clark in their meeting on Saturday.

"They know us very well," he said, referring to past ties.

"We were received in the White House, we were received in the State Department, in all the offices of the government of the U.S. Many American officials visited Iraq and met with President Saddam Hussein."

Since the Gulf war, however, Washington has refused to deal with Baghdad and has been at the forefront of efforts to keep in place the U.N. economic sanctions slapped on Iraq for its Kuwait invasion.

"But an official newspaper said earlier this month that Baghdad should hand out contracts to U.S. oil companies as part of a new approach in the battle to have sanctions lifted."

"Open our doors to U.S. oil companies, who can bring [U.S. President] Bill Clinton's neck and force him to his knees to beg our pardon and extend a hand to Iraq," said Al Mustaqbal, which is run by President Saddam's eldest son Uday.

Mr. Clark, who has visited Iraq several times since the war, arrived Friday to deliver \$4 million worth of medical aid.

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Last month an Iraqi newspaper reported that Russian ambassador in Iraq met separately with Mr. Barzani and Mr. Talabani and asked them to resume diplomatic contacts with Baghdad.

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The Iraqi attack prompted the United States to launch missile strikes against air defence targets in southern Iraq.

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Jagger no longer satisfied

BONN (AFP) — Rolling Stones vocalist Mick Jagger famously sang "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." These days, he feels that way about touring. Travelling round the world for huge rock concerts isn't fun any more, he told the German magazine *Fuer Sie* shortly before the Stones set off on their "Bridges to Babylon" tour. "The older I get, the more touring bores me," Jagger, 54, complained, and said for that reason the next tour would be shorter than previous ones. Concerts were just "part of my work" because people wanted it that way, he added. "Lots of people want to see the Stones in concert, so we make them happy and cash the money."

Depardieu starring in four small screen classic parts

PARIS (AFP) — Fresh from his role as one of the musketeers in "The Man in the Iron Mask," Gerard Depardieu is taking to the small screen in four more classic parts. Depardieu, one of France's best-known actors, is already starring as "The Count of Monte Cristo" in a mini-series for France's TF1 television. Now he's also taking the lead in three other mini-series for TF1. They are "Balzac," on the life of the 19th century French writer Honoré de Balzac, and "Victor Hugo's" and "Les Misérables" and "Notre-Dame de Paris." In "The Man in the Iron Mask," Depardieu plays opposite Hollywood's newest heart-throb Leonardo DiCaprio as well as John Malkovich, Gabriel Byrne and Jeremy Irons.

Kudrow has baby boy

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's a boy for "Friends" star Lisa Kudrow. The actress gave birth 3.34-kilogramme boy, spokeswoman Jennifer Allen announced. The TV star and husband Michel Stern named their son Julian Murray. Mother and baby were resting comfortably, Allen said.

Bergman is writing script of his life story

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Ingmar Bergman is writing the script of his life story — or at least part of it — for a film to be directed by Liv Ullmann, who has appeared in many Bergman movies. Bergman will write the screenplay for "The Faithless," which deals with a woman and her passionate love life involving two men. Bergman, 79, says he was one of those men. Norwegian actress-director Ullmann had a five-year relationship with Bergman, who said he wanted to star in the role of the director, but was not allowed to. "He isn't good enough an actor," Ullmann joked.

Maxwell to unveil choice for Joan of Arc

NEW YORK (AFP) — U.S. film director Ron Maxwell is about to unveil his choice to play Joan of Arc in his upcoming movie about the 15th-century French national heroine. The director of "Gettysburg" tells the New York Post that the winner is a young, New York-based actress with a Roman Catholic background. Maxwell, who is putting together a movie about St. Joan at the same time as French director Luc Besson, says of his project: "The mystery explored in our film is the drama of the life of the soul, or to be more specific, the soul's calling." Besson has announced that his girlfriend, Milla Jovovich, will play the Maid of Orleans in his version.

Egypt: Israel has sent peace process back to square one

CAIRO (AFP) — The Middle East peace process is back where it started because of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rejection of U.S. proposals to resume stalled negotiations, Egypt's foreign minister said Sunday.

"We are almost back to square one. We are in the midst of an unprecedented crisis," Amr Musa said in an interview broadcast late Sunday on Egyptian television station Nile TV.

"It is clear that the current Israeli government is not ready for peace. They want to impose an Israeli peace," he said.

U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross failed during a mission to Israel to convince Mr. Netanyahu to approve U.S. proposals for a further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and attend a peace summit in Washington on Monday.

"It is important not to accept the current Israeli attitude, not to give it any

chance of success. We have to stand firm against it," Mr. Musa said.

He also said it would be "unjust and unfair" to put further pressure on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who had accepted the U.S. proposals.

"The Palestinian side has accepted the compromise proposed by the USA and that's it. The Israeli side has to conform to the rules of the game as agreed by the international community."

Israel's Labour Party leader warns of conflict with U.S.

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli opposition leader Ehud Barak warned the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday to steer clear of a conflict with the United States.

The Labour Party leader, speaking to Israel Radio, said "the United States are our allies and it is not in our interest to cause friction with Mr. Clinton by launching a campaign against him in Congress or with the American public."

Mr. Barak was commenting on the decision to put off a meeting in Washington on Monday called by U.S. President Bill Clinton to try to salvage the deadlocked

Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

"We have enough to do at home," said Mr. Barak. "We don't need to be paranoid and risk widening the gap between Israel and the United States because that could work dangerously against us."

The summit was delayed to an unspecified date amid Mr. Netanyahu's continued refusal to accept a U.S. proposal calling for an Israeli withdrawal from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank.

Mr. Netanyahu is scheduled to visit the United States on Wednesday to attend the annual conference of the American Israel Public

Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and a parade in New York celebrating the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Jewish state.

Mr. Barak also told the radio that there had been no talk with Mr. Netanyahu of forming a government of national unity.

He said Labour would support "any move by Netanyahu in the direction of peace."

"But we will continue to work to topple his government because his policies are leading to the collapse of the peace process and tragedy," he added.

Becoming first Palestinian leader to visit emirate
 Hamas chief seeks Kuwaiti support for Palestinian cause

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, founder of the Islamist movement Hamas, has arrived in Kuwait and become the first Palestinian leader to visit the emirate since the 1991 Gulf war.

Sheikh Yassin, who flew in late Saturday from the United Arab Emirates, told the official news agency KUNA that he would seek the Kuwaiti leadership's "moral, material and political support for the Palestinian cause."

Visiting at the invitation of the crown prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdulkhalik Al Sabah, he is

also due to hold talks with the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, and Kuwaiti MPs, KUNA said.

Kuwait, the fifth leg of a Gulf tour by Sheikh Yassin, suspended ties with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) because of its support for Baghdad during the crisis which followed Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait and led to the Gulf war.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from Kuwait after the war which evicted Iraqi troops.

Before the invasion, the oil-rich emirate was a key finan-

cial backer of the PLO. But PLO leaders, including President Yasser Arafat, have since been unwelcome in Kuwait.

Sheikh Yassin told KUNA he has also received an invitation from Iraq but that he declined to visit Baghdad until it settle the issue of Kuwaitis missing from the occupation.

The spiritual guide of Hamas is also expected to visit Khartoum by the end of May, an official Sudanese daily said Sunday. He has also been to Iran, Qatar and Saudi Arabia since April.

Bomb injures 15 in Algeria

ALGIERS (AP) — A bomb exploded near a Turkish bathhouse in a working class neighbourhood, injuring as many as 30 people and breaching a two-month lull in attacks on the capital by Islamists, officials said.

The blast in the Bab Al-Oued district on Saturday afternoon set off other explosions apparently from broken gas lines, authorities said.

Security forces reported 15 people were injured, but rescue workers privately reported about 30 were hurt, 20 seriously.

Police cordoned off the neighbourhood through the night, searching cars at roadblocks. Uniformed and plainclothed police also searched nearby neighbourhoods for suspects.

There was no claim of responsibility, but suspicion fell on the Armed Islamic Group. Known by its French initials GIA, it is the most violent movement in the insurgency that has left more than 70,000 dead since the government scrapped January 1992 elections that Islamists were expected to win.

Even the Palestinians do not want Washington to pull out. Top Palestinian officials support the United States proposal on the West Bank withdrawal. They also realise that Europe has even less power to influence Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu into agreeing to concessions.

One advantage is that the Clinton administration can now publicly unveil its proposal for resolving the situation on the West Bank, and blame Mr. Netanyahu for 13 months of deadlock.

Mr. Netanyahu has steadfastly refused any U.S. "dic-

Mideast summit cancellation leaves U.S. with few options

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton has little room to manoeuvre following the cancellation of three-way Middle East peace talks planned here for next week.

Clinton officials cannot cut military and civil aid to Israel — which amounts to more than \$3 billion per year — without drawing howls of protest from the U.S. Congress.

Yet it is out of the question, as U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has clearly stated, for the United States to pull out of peace talks it has overseen since 1991.

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tion," stating that the U.S. plan for Israel to make a further troop withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank is a threat to its security.

The proposal, however, has already been widely circulated and Washington risks further irritating Mr. Netanyahu's conservative supporters by making it the "official" U.S. position.

Several events have coincided in Mr. Netanyahu's favour. On one hand Mr. Netanyahu has been deftly using Israel's friends in the U.S. Congress to pressure Mr. Clinton. With mid-term congressional elections coming up in November, few U.S. politicians will dare say anything to offend Israel.

Some 222 members of the U.S. House of Representatives — more than a majority — already have signed a letter to Mr. Clinton saying they were worried the U.S. negotiating tactic could "undermine Israel's confidence."

The marking of Israel's 50th anniversary also makes the administration's position difficult.

On Wednesday U.S. Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich said the Clinton administration was telling Israel: "Happy

birthday. Let us hickmail you on behalf of (Palestinian President Yasser) Arafat." In comparison, the political clout of Arab-Americans remains weak.

And despite the heated debate, the U.S. public has little interest in foreign affairs unless the lives of U.S. soldiers are at stake.

The Clinton administration itself deserves a share of the blame by underestimating Mr. Netanyahu's determination to undercut the Oslo accords.

After three visits by the Israeli prime minister to Washington, U.S. officials were still saying they expected him to follow in the footsteps of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the soldier who turned into a man of peace.

Then there is the matter of U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton's statements in favour of a Palestinian state that put the White House squarely on the defensive.

"I think that it will be in the long-term interest of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state," the first lady told Arab and Israeli students in a live satellite link with a "Seeds of Peace" meeting in Switzerland Wednesday.

Hizbollah rockets wound
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